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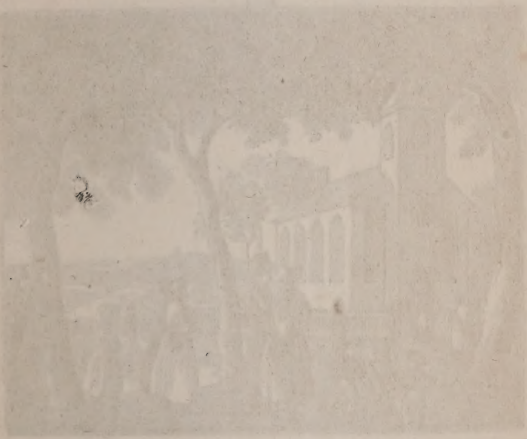

THE

SABBATH-DAY BOOK

FOR

BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY THE

EDITORS OF THE POPULAR LIBRARY.

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JOHN ALLEN & CO.

1835.

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PREFACE.

THE design of this work is to furnish interesting and useful reading for children on the Sabbath day; it comprises familiar directions in regard to the manner in which the day should be observed, illustrations of the various moral and religious duties of children, practical expositions of scripture, with directions for studying it, and narratives and descriptions calculated to interest the youthful mind and promote its spiritual improvement.

The work consists in part of original matter, and in part of selections from such writings as are adapted to the purpose in view. In these selections, care has been taken, to draw from such sources as are not generally accessible to children, so that the whole volume will be in most cases new, and the editors hope that it may render some aid at least to parents in their efforts to exert a proper influence over their children, and to find suitable and interesting employment for them on the sacred day.

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THE

SABBATH DAY BOOK.

CHAP. I.

HOW TO KEEP THE SABBATH.

1. Saturday Night: a Scene at Home. 2. Account of Dick the Sabbath-breaker.

One Saturday evening between sunset and dark, several boys were playing upon a sort of common in the heart of a pleasant village. They were in front of a two story white house, which had a little yard filled with shrubbery, before it. The door of this house presently opened and a matronly looking lady appeared, who stood there a few minutes looking at the boys.

Presently a small boy who had been looking on while the others were at play, rather than taking any very active part in their sports, came up to one who appeared to be his older brother, and who had just run up, without his coat or hat, and almost out of breath, and sat down upon a little tuft of grass.

"George," said he, "there is mother standing at the door; don't you think she wants us to come in?"

"I don't know," said George hesitatingly, looking towards the house,—do you think she does?"

"No,—No," said a large rough looking boy who happened to be near.—"No; let her call you if she

wants you. Come ! up ! and let us have another game."

The boys did not rise, but continued looking at their mother.

"I think she does want us," said the little boy. "She would not like to call aloud for us, and she has nobody to send for us. You know it is Saturday night."

"Poh," replied the rude boy we have before mentioned,—"don't act like fools. She can find ways enough to get you in if she wants you. It isn't near dark, yet."

George and his little brother might, perhaps, have hesitated about their duty, or rather they might have been tempted to have neglected it, but the rude and coarse way by which this playmate of theirs, spoke of their mother, seemed to operate in just the contrary way to what he intended. George got up and began to put on his hat and coat, and his little brother ran on towards the house. Their companion did all he could to restrain them from going, but they were firm.

When they reached the house they found that their mother did want them to come in, and she looked pleased and happy that they had taken some pains to ascertain and comply with her desires : I wish all the boys and girls who may read this, could always act on the same principles instead of waiting always to have positive, and perhaps repeated, commands before they will obey. Children ought to comply with their parents' desires however they are expressed. If I hold up my finger to my little boy, when he is making a noise, meaning by it that he must be still, he is guilty of disobedience, if he disregards it, just as much as if I had told him to be still in the most

distinct and emphatic manner. So if boys are walking in the garden, and know that their mother does not wish them to eat the green fruit, they are as much bound not to do it as if they had received an express prohibition ; and yet, how often do children say, "mother did not *tell* us" not to do this or that, and consider that an excuse for doing it, when, still, they know very well, that she did not wish them to do it.

But, I am wandering a little from my story. The mother of these two boys seemed much pleased that they were so ready to obey her wishes, though they were so slightly expressed. They stood at the door talking a few minutes about the game of "I spy," which the boys had been playing, and about the beautiful appearance of the last rays of the twilight which were gilding with a mild light, the distant mountains, and then they walked in. The mother led them into her bed room. There was a large easy chair in one corner of it, near a window. Before the window stood a work table, covered with books and work which their sister Lucy, a little girl, was putting up. They helped her put away her work in the drawers, and arranged the books on the shelves, and then put the work table back into its place on one side of the room. The mother then sat down in the great chair, and the children came and stood before her, for she said she wanted to speak to them.

"Well, children," said she, "we have got through another week, and now it is time for us to begin to think of the sabbath.

"Now, I want you to have a happy Sabbath,—and more than that, I want you to have a Sabbath which will be followed by a happy week. Now, I

have a way to propose for you to keep the sabbath to-morrow, which I think you will find a happy way, if you will give it a fair trial."

"Well, we will," said Lucy.

"Yes, mother," said the little boy, who stood leaning on his mother's knee, and looking up into her face. I believe however I have not yet told my readers his name; it was Arthur.

"You remember the fourth commandment," said the mother, "it makes two things necessary to the proper keeping of the Sabbath. One is to cease from all the common employments of the week, and the other is to keep the day holy to God. Now I want you, if you are willing to keep the Sabbath my way, to remember that it is to be devoted to *duty*, not to idleness or pleasure. In fact, you must expect some hard work, for, although we rest from *common* labours on the Lord's day, we cannot keep it holy in the sense intended by the commandment, without engaging in some *new* duties, which will require a good deal of effort and self denial."

"Now some of the things I shall wish you to do, you must do with the heart, or rather I shall want you not merely to do the things themselves, but to do them from the right motives.

"For instance, I have called you in from your play, and now I shall want you to go and do all you can to prepare for to-morrow, by anticipating all the business which would otherwise have to be done to-morrow, and doing as much of it to-night as possible, so as to be free and uninterrupted during the hours of the Sabbath. But then, it will be very important that you do this from the right feeling. If you had come in pouting and unhappy, displeased because I called you in, and vexed because you lost

your play, and then should go about your preparations this evening with a discontented unsubmissive spirit, obeying only from fear of punishment, you would be miserable now, and would have made but a poor preparation for the morrow."

"I see you smile, as if it were absurd to suppose you would feel thus. I know you will not have such feelings. In fact, I have been very much gratified to observe how pleasantly and readily you came in, and how willing you now seem to be to do what I am going to propose. But there is another kind of motive which I am a little afraid will be the one which will influence you, and which is not the right one."

"What is it?" asked the children.

"I am afraid your motive will be only to please me. While you are watering your plants, and putting up your garden tools, and arranging your rooms, and making all your other preparations for the sabbath, you will be thinking,—how pleased mother will be to see all these things done carefully and well."

The children smiled.

"Now I am very glad to have you love to please me, but I want you also to love to please God. He will observe how you make your preparations for his day, and if you think of Him, and act from a desire to please Him, He will approve your conduct as much as I shall.

"Now, I want you, while you go to your work, to think occasionally that you are doing something for the sake of enabling you to obey God's commands more fully to-morrow. Be faithful and careful in all you have to do, from a desire to please God as well as to please me. I want you to be his friends and to love him, as well as to love your mother.

For I cannot stay with you always in this world; your father has already gone, and I must go too, but we want to have you with us in heaven."

There was a pause for a moment. The children did not speak, and their mother sat still a short time, musing upon past or future scenes. Presently she continued.

"You see then, I want you now to go and make your preparations for the Sabbath, thinking of God, and desiring to please him in doing it. This will make you faithful and careful, and pleasant to one another, and when your work is done, and you are ready to go to bed, I will tell you what you shall do first in the morning."

The children seemed pleased with their mother's proposal and apparently entered into it with all their hearts, and they hastened away out of the room to commence their operations. In a few minutes they were all busily engaged, industrious, contented and happy. At about half past eight they collected again in their mother's room to receive her instructions for the next day, and then to bid her good night.

"Do you think what I am going to give you to do to-morrow is hard or easy?"

"Easy," said Lucy.

"Hard," said George.

"It will be hard at the time. That is, you will have to make considerable effort in the course of the day, to discharge all your duties aright."

After the mother said this, she went on explaining to them what she wished them to do, and in what way they were to keep the Holy Day. Before going on to write what she said, I wish to say to my readers that it is not very entertaining. If any of you have opened this book merely for the purpose

of finding something to amuse yourselves with, I presume you will skip two or three pages of what follows here. In fact, if your object is simply to be entertained, I do not know but that I should advise you to skip it. But, if you wish to know how you can make the Sabbath a happy day, and are willing to make a little effort for this purpose,—a little effort do I say,—I mean a great deal of effort, I advise you to read this lady's conversation with her children, in the most careful and attentive manner. She went on as follows.

"There are four kinds of duty, which you will have to perform to-morrow which I wish to speak about now, my children, and if you really wish to please God, you will attend to what I say carefully, and try to do what I shall describe.

1. Study, and Reading.
2. Meditation and Prayer.
3. Public Worship.
4. Rest.

1. STUDY AND READING.

"Your day will be spent more pleasantly and more profitably if you devote a few hours to study and reading. You have a Sabbath School lesson to learn. Now, I advise you to rise early and spend about an hour in the silent, careful, diligent study of that lesson, before breakfast. It will be hard I know. You will feel sleepy when I call you in the morning, and it will be hard for you to confine yourselves a whole hour to your work. But when it is done and you come to breakfast with your lesson well learned, you will feel a satisfaction and happiness which will fully repay you for the effort you made. By one hour's exertion, if you make it with right motives, you will lay up a stock of happiness

for a long time. Now, if any of you wish it I will call you an hour before breakfast, that you may try this plan, but do not ask me to call you unless you are really determined to rise and engage in the work. Do you think you can learn your lessons perfectly in an hour ?"

The children thought they could.

"It may, perhaps, be best," said the mother, "for you to review them carefully just before going to school, and perhaps fifteen minutes spent in a review, together with the hour in the morning, will be enough severe study for the day. But then, there is reading. I will give you something to read, after breakfast, before meeting. Now, there is a right way and a wrong way of reading on the Sabbath. Do you know what the wrong way is ?"

"Yes, mother, one wrong way is to read improper books."

"True ; but I referred chiefly to the mode of reading. Suppose you take a proper book and sit down by a window to read merely for amusement, or to occupy the tedious hours, as children often do upon the Sabbath, it will do you but little good. For, if you see anything out of doors which seems more entertaining than the book, your eyes will leave the book to watch the object, and so your mind will be in a listless state, and not occupied seriously with anything. I have known a boy sit at a window with a book in his hand, sometimes reading a little,—skipping over the serious looking part, and finding out the dialogue and incident,—sometimes looking at a picture in his book, sometimes gazing at the objects without, and sometimes watching a fly upon the glass,—in this way, wasting his time and receiving no benefit or enjoyment."

The children looked at one another and smiled while their mother said this. They felt that it was true.

"Now, when you sit down to read," continued the mother, "it is best to devote yourself to it. Play while you play, and read while you read. Consider how much time you are going to have and select a portion to be read, of a suitable length. Then give your attention to it. That is the only way to secure either the pleasure or profit of reading. You have all enjoyed pleasure in reading, have you not?"

"Oh! yes;" replied the children.

"Well, if you think of the times when you were enjoying reading, you will remember, I think, that you were all absorbed in it,—your whole attention was occupied with it."

"Yes, mother."

"Then to-morrow, when you sit down to your reading, ascertain before you begin, that you are going to have some time uninterrupted, and then give yourself to the work; try to get deeply interested in your book, and to remove from your mind every thing which can draw off your attention. I know this will be hard. It is a great deal easier to take some little picture book and sit down with the kitten playing before you, or the window to look out of, first to read a little and then to look out, and then to read a little more, and then to stop and play with the pussy. This is easier, but is not so pleasant in the end. It is not the way to spend a happy hour.

"I advise you too, not to have your reading books about all day, but select two or three times for reading, when you can have half or three quarters of an hour without interruption; then choose your book

judiciously, and read carefully and thoroughly, and without allowing your thoughts to wander to any thing else whatever. In this way, you will soon become deeply interested in your book, and your hour will be spent not only in a profitable, but in a very pleasant, happy manner.

"So much for study and reading. I now come to the second thing which I was going to speak to you about; MEDITATION and PRAYER. This is another duty which is hard, but at the same time very pleasant, if you will only do it. Arthur, do you think you have done any thing wrong during the last week?"

Arthur had begun to look a little sleepy, but this question aroused him; he looked up into his mother's face, hesitated a little, and then said, "I struck George, because he took away my boat."

"I did not mean to have you tell me now *what* you done, but only whether you think you *have* done wrong. Now, do you not suppose that you have done a good many other things which are wrong?"

"Yes, mother."

"You could not think of them all in a moment; sometimes you have done what is wrong, and you have said what is wrong, and often, perhaps, you have felt wrong, in your heart. Now, suppose that to-morrow, you should go away by yourself and look back upon the whole week, and call to mind every thing wrong in your conduct or feelings;—that would be *meditation;* and then, suppose you should describe all this sin to God, and ask him to forgive you for Christ's sake;—that would be prayer. To do this faithfully would take some time. You see it would be necessary to think of what you did every day, and examine the whole history of the

week,—first perhaps you would think of school, all the faults you committed there,—then of home, all your ill-humour, and impatience, and disobedience, and unkindness and unfaithfulness, here. Then you would think of your plays, and endeavor to recollect all you had done that was wrong while with the other boys at recess, or after school; and thus, you would go over the whole ground; you would examine all your conduct for the purpose of finding out every thing that was wrong in it. This, as I said before, would take some time, but it would be time well spent.

There are other subjects for meditation besides your own past faults; but I will not mention any more now, as this one will be enough for you to-morrow; you will see at once, all of you how much influence it will have upon you all next week if you would thus faithfully examine your past conduct and confess your sins to God. This is the reason why meditation is so often spoken of in the Bible, and in other good books, as a christian duty. It is as much a duty for children, as for grown persons. I advise you all, therefore, to set apart a half an hour sometime to-morrow, for this purpose. Go where you can be alone, and uninterrupted, and spend the time in honest, faithful, and systematic self-examination, and be sure that you confess fully to God, all the sins you find. If you do this, I will give you next Sabbath some other subject for meditation.

Now, I come to the third duty. But perhaps you are tired. I suppose, in fact, that you are, but I think I had better go through and finish what I had to say. It will give you a useful lesson in mental discipline to make an effort to listen. Indeed, the duty you have to do now is exactly that which I was

going to describe to you next,—that of attending carefully to what is said by the minister at church even if you are tired, or if you do not understand all that is said. Children think they are excusable for being inattentive at church because they cannot understand the minister. Now how do you think a little child learns to talk ?"

The children said they did not know.

"Why, he learns to talk by listening to what he cannot understand, until he at length learns to understand it. That is the way he learns. There are very few words explained to him, and he never looks any out in a dictionary. He hears his father and mother talk, and at first, he understands a little, then a little more, and at last, almost all. Suppose he should, at the beginning, pay no attention to what is said in his hearing, because he cannot understand it; why he would never learn to talk. So with you; if you want ever to learn to understand the language and sentiments of men, you must go where they are speaking and hear them, and *attend* to them. You ought to go to meeting prepared to make an effort to understand the minister. If you cannot understand all, understand as much as you can. If you go to meeting, determining to bring all your powers into exercise while the minister is addressing you, you will find that you will understand more than you have supposed possible, and you will make progress every sabbath, so that in a short time you can follow the minister in what he says, as well as any of the congregation. It will be hard work to do this, I know, but though hard, it will be pleasant work, and it will be a source of satisfaction and happiness, when it is done.

"Be especially careful also to join sincerely, in the

devotional exercises at meeting. I mean in the prayers and the singing. Do not be looking about the house, and letting your thoughts wander. That is a great sin against God. Listen to the words of the hymn and of the prayer, and endeavor to feel in your own hearts, the desires they express ; then God will consider the prayer as coming from you, and you may expect his blessing.

" There is only one thing more I wish to speak to you about, and that is, *rest.* You will observe that the duties which I have been describing are all, if they are properly performed, hard work, and though a moderate quantity of hard work is very pleasant, yet you cannot be employed all day in such severe, intellectual effort. You must have some rest. Besides, the sabbath is given partly for the very purpose of being a day of rest from the fatigue of weekly labors, and therefore we ought not to load it with heavier burdens of its own. When you are resting, however, you ought to be still. Your conversation should not be loud and noisy. If you sit upon the steps of the door, or take a walk in the yard or garden, you should be quiet and orderly, remembering the sacredness of the day, and feeling at all times, the presence of God."

The mother shortened her remarks on these last points, for she found it was growing late, and she wished the children to rise early in the morning. She said she would give them more minute directions in regard to the particular hours in the morning, and then bade them good night. As she followed them up stairs to their rooms, they told her to be sure and not forget to wake them early in the morning.

Such is the story of this lady's interview with her children Saturday night. I am sorry to say that I

cannot now tell my readers how far the children complied the next day with their mother's advice. I may, perhaps, do this at some future time. In the meantime I shall close this chapter by giving an account of the manner in which a certain bad boy whom I once knew, used to conduct upon the Sabbath. His name was Dick.

In the first place he always seemed to be unusually sleepy in the morning. He never wanted to get up when he was waked. He would say he was going to get up presently, but almost always he would go to sleep again, and give his mother or his sisters the trouble of coming up the second time to wake him. Dick did not go to Sabbath school, and so he used to think there was no need of getting up upon Sabbath mornings until it was late. "Why can't I lay a little longer," he would say, "I havn't got any thing to do." Sometimes he did not come down stairs until the family had all done breakfast, and then the table would have to stand waiting for him. After sleeping so late, he would feel too stupid to read or to study, and so he would saunter about, or sit down to play with the cat or to yawn and do nothing until it was time for meeting. This was a very miserable as well a very wicked way of spending Sabbath morning, and it always seemed strange to me, that Dick never found it out.

I heard a gentleman say once, that he wished he had a pew somewhere else in the meeting-house, for the children in the pew beside him were so restless and inattentive, that he could not listen to the minister. Now Dick was one of the boys who sat in this pew. He almost always carried something to play with, and with that he would be busy at sermon time. Perhaps, he would have a rose ; and this he

would pass from one to another in the pew to smell of, and then he would go to picking it to pieces, and snapping the leaves. At another time, he would have a lead pencil, and scribble upon the hymn-books, or draw ridiculous pictures to make the other children laugh. He was either whispering or laughing, or moving about continually. He got no good by going to meeting himself, and he prevented other people from getting any. This was breaking the sabbath just as much as if he had been out in the street or the yard, playing ball, or driving hoop. Boys and girls find it rather tedious sometimes to sit still so long as they are obliged to, but it doesn't help the matter for them, to laugh and play or make any disturbance. They ought to sit still themselves, and do nothing to make their brothers and sisters laugh or play

Dick's mother used to give him and his sister Emily a few verses in the Bible, or a short hymn or prayer to learn every Sunday. When her mother gave Emily the book that she was to study from, she would take it and sit down very quietly to study until she had learned the whole lesson. She read it over to herself, instead of jabbering so loud as to disturb other people. Instead of coming every minute or two, with her book, and teasing her mother to hear her then, she would wait until she was quite sure she could say it perfectly. Her mother never sent Emily out of the room, to study her lesson, for she knew that she would be still, and she liked to have such a quiet, diligent little girl sitting beside her. Emily always tried to understand what she was studying. She read the whole over carefully first, and thought of the meaning, before she commltted the words to memory.

But Dick had a very different way of studying his lessons. He hated to study, and when he was called to come and sit down to study it he never came quick and pleasantly; but he lagged slowly along and dragged his cricket after him so as to make a great deal of noise. One Sabbath his father was sitting by the fire, reading a very interesting book. His mother was reading too, and Emily was sitting by her side studying her lesson. Dick was walking about the room, without any book or any thing to do. Once in a while, he went to the window and looked out upon the ground that was covered with snow; and he felt sorry that it was Sunday, so that he could not go out and make up some snow-balls. Presently the cat came into the room, and he ran to catch her. He went chasing her about from under the chairs and table, and made such a noise that he disturbed his father and mother very much. His father was obliged to put down his book and attend to him. "Come here," his father said, "I want to give you a lesson to learn, and you must come and sit down by me and study it." Dick scowled and felt very unwilling to come; but he was afraid to disobey, so he came slowly along with his cricket and his Testament. Dick's father felt very sorry that his little boy did not love to study any better, and that he did not come quick and pleasantly when he was called. He took the Testament and gave him five verses to learn from the second chapter of Matthew. It was the story of the infant Jesus, that every boy and girl should learn, who is old enough to read. But Dick did not care any thing about learning it, he had rather saunter and waste his time. "Why, father, *must* I learn five verses?" he said when he took the book; "why, I can't learn so

many ; need I learn more than four ?" In this way, he made his father a great deal of trouble, besides interrupting him from his reading. Children seem to think sometimes, that they do their parents and their Sabbath school teachers a great favor when they learn their lessons to say to them. They don't consider that it is for their own good that they are required to study, and not because it will do their teachers or parents any good. What good would it do Dick's father to have him learn the five verses ? He wanted his little boy to study the Bible for his own good.

When the boy took the book, instead of reading over the five verses and trying to understand what he learnt, he began to say over the words, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem,—now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem," just as a parrot would say them. Once in a while, he would stop studying and take out a piece of twine or his jack-knife, and begin to play with it, and then his father or his mother would have to stop to speak to him. For a minute, he would go on studying again ; but presently, he would be playing again or reaching behind his mother's chair to touch his sister Emily and make her look at something. And then his parents would be interrupted again. Before he had half learnt his lesson, he asked his father to hear him say it. His father took the book and he began to stammer out the words—"Now when Jesus was born—now when Jesus was born—in Bethlehem,—in Bethlehem—behold—"

"Oh ! you hav'nt learnt it yet," his father said ; "you must study it more."—"Well, now, I can say it—just hear me once more," said he.—"Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, behold—behold,

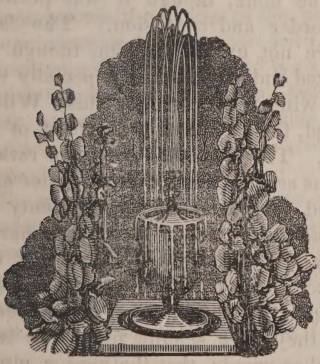
"No; you have left out some," his father said, "you must take the book and study it a little longer."

"Oh! dear," said he, as if he thought his case was a very hard one. Lazy boys and girls always find it hard work to study. They must be determined not to feel indolent, or to give their parents and teachers any trouble about their lessons, if they would have it seem pleasant to study.

Dick used sometimes to steal away from home and go to play in a little wood at the foot of his father's garden. He contrived to do this secretly, and he never was gone long, for fear that his father might enquire into it. At last he began sometimes to play truant from his Sabbath school, and spend the time in play, and he continued this occasionally until once in crossing over a brook upon a narrow log, he fell in, and was carried down into deep water, so that he narrowly escaped being drowned. He caught hold of some branches on the bank, and screamed, and presently some one came to his assistance. Of course his truancy was now discovered, for when he went home terrified and miserable, his parents easily found out the whole truth.

A great many boys have been killed or drowned when playing on the Sabbath, and some persons think they are more in danger of accidents on that day. Perhaps they are, for a consciousness that they are doing wrong must deprive them of that composure and presence of mind which might otherwise have saved them. I think that Dick for instance would be likely to go over that small log much more firmly and steadily when he was going on an errand for his father, than when running away from school. For in this latter case he must have been uneasy and anxious, afraid that somebody might see

him, or agitated by thinking how certainly he must be discovered if he should fall in. Then again any calamity which befals a boy when he is doing wrong causes him much greater suffering than if he was in the way of duty. He feels guilty and condemned, and it generally leads to his exposure ; and then if he should be drowned, or lose his life in any way, and we are always in danger of this, he is cut off in the very midst of his sins. Boys ought therefore to be afraid to break the Sabbath. They had better go into the midst of a pestilence, when duty calls them there, than go out in the safest boat in the world, on the Sabbath day.



CHAP. II.

THE ALLEGORIES.

1. The Servant Man turned Soldier. 2. The Grand Trial. 3. The Valley of Tears. 4. The Strait Gate and Broad Way. 5. The Captive.

Allegory I.—*The Servant Man turned Soldier; or the Fair Weather Christian. By Hannah More.*

William was a lively young servant who lived in a great but very irregular family. His place was, on the whole, agreeable to him, and suited to his gay, thoughtless temper. He found a plentiful table and a good cellar. There was indeed a good deal of work to be done, though it was performed with much disorder and confusion. The family in the main were not unkind to him, though they often contradicted and crossed him, especially when things went ill with themselves. This, William never much liked, for he was always fond of having his own way. There was a merry, or rather a noisy and riotous servant's hall; for disorder and quarrels are indeed the usual effects of plenty and unrestrained indulgence. The men were smart, but idle; the maids were showy, but licentious; and all did pretty much as they liked for a time, but the time was commonly short. The wages were reckoned high, but they were seldom paid, and it was even said by sober people, that the master was insolvent, and never fulfilled any of his flattering engagements, or his most positive promises; but still, notwithstanding his real poverty, things went on with just the same thoughtlessness and splendor, and neither master or servants looked beyond the jollity of the present hour.

In this unruly family there was little church going, and still less praying at home They pretended, indeed, in a general way, to believe in the Bible, but it was only an outward profession; few of them read it at all, and even of those who did read it, still fewer were governed by it. There was indeed a Bible lying on the table in the great hall, which was kept for the purpose of administering an oath, but was seldom used on any other occasion, and some of the heads of the family were of opinion that this was its only real use, as it might serve to keep the lower parts of it in order.

William, who was fond of novelty and pleasure, was apt to be negligent of the duties of the house. He used to stay out on his errands, and one of his favorite amusements was going to the parade to see the soldiers exercise.* He saw with envy how smartly they were dressed, listened with rapture to the music, and fancied that a soldier had nothing to do but walk to and fro in certain regular order, to go through a little easy exercise, in short, to live without fighting, fatigue, or danger.

"Oh!" said he, whenever he was affronted at home, "what a fine thing it must be to be a soldier! to be so well dressed, to have nothing to do but to move to the pleasant sound of fife and drum, and to have so many people to come to look at one, and admire one. O it must be a fine thing to be a soldier!"

Yet when the vexation of the moment was over, he found so much ease and diversion in his master's house, so suited to his low taste and sensual appetites,

* In England where this story was written, the soldiers are a distinct class of men, hired by the government, and employed all the time in doing military duty.

that he thought no more of the matter. He forgot the glories of a soldier, and eagerly returned to all the mean gratifications of the kitchen. His evil habits were but little attended to by those with whom he lived; his faults, among which were lying and swearing, were not often corrected by the family, who had little objection to those sins which only offended God, and did not much affect their own interest or property. And except that William was obliged to work rather more than he liked, he found little, while he was young and healthy, that was very disagreeable in this service. So he went on, still thinking, however, when things went a little cross, "what a fine thing it was to be a soldier!" and at last, one day as he was waiting at dinner, he had the misfortune to let fall a china dish, and broke it all to pieces. It was a curious dish, much valued by the family, as they pretended; this family were indeed apt to set a false fantastic value on things, and not to estimate them by their real worth. The heads of the family, who had generally been rather patient and good humoured with Willian, as I said before, for these vices, which, though offensive to God, did not touch their own pocket, now flew out into a violent passion with him, called him a thousand hard names, and even threatened to horsewhip him for his shameful negligence.

William, in a great fright, for he was a sad coward at bottom, ran directly out of the house, to avoid the threatened punishment, and happening just at that very time to pass by the parade where the soldiers chanced to be then exercising, his resolution was taken in a moment. He instantly determined to be no more a slave, as he called it; he would return no more to be subject to the humours of a tyrannical

family; no, he was resolved to be free, or, at least, if he must serve, he would serve no master but the King.

William, who had now and then happened to hear, from the accidental talk of the soldiers, that those who served the *great family* he had lived with, were slaves to their tyranny and vices, had also heard, in the same casual manner, that the service of the *King* was *perfect freedom.* Now he had taken it into his head to hope that this might be a freedom to do evil, or at least to do nothing, so he thought it was the only place in the world to suit him.

A fine likely young fellow as William was, had no great difficulty to get enlisted. The few forms were soon settled, he received the bounty-money* as eagerly as it was offered, took the oaths of allegiance, and was joined to the regiment, and heartily welcomed by his new comrades. He was the happiest fellow alive. All was smooth and calm. The day happened to be very fine, and therefore William always reckoned upon a fine day. The scene was gay and lively, the music cheerful, he found the exercise very easy, and he thought there was little more expected from him.

He soon began to flourish away in his talk; and when he met with any one of his old fellow-servants, he fell a prating about marches and counter-marches, and blockades, and battles, and sieges, and blood, and death, and triumphs, and victories, all at random; for these were words and phrases he had picked up, without at all understanding what he said. He had no knowledge, and therefore he had no modesty; he had no experience, and therefore he had no fears.

* Money paid in advance to a soldier when he enlists.

All seemed to go on swimingly, for he had as yet no trial. He began to think with triumph what a mean life he had escaped from in the old quarrelsome family, and what a happy honorable life he should have in the army. *O, there was no life like the life of a soldier.*

In a short time, however, war broke out, his regiment was one of the first which was called out to actual and hard service. As William was the most raw of all the recruits, he was the first to murmur at the difficulties and hardships, the cold and hunger, the fatigue and danger, of being a soldier. O what watchings, and perils, and trials, and hardships, and difficulties, he now thought attended a military life! "Surely," said he, "I could never have suspected all this misery when I used to see the men on the parade in our town."

He now found, when it was too late, that all the field-days he used to attend, all the evolutions and exercises which he had observed the soldiers to go through, in the calm times of peace and safety, were only meant to fit, train, and qualify them for the actual service, which they were now sent out to perform by the command of the *King*.

The truth is, William often complained when there was no real hardship to complain of; for the common troubles of life fell out pretty much alike to the *great family* which William had left, and to the soldiers in the *King's army*. But the spirit of obedience, discipline, and self-denial of the latter, seemed hardships to one of William's loose turn of mind. When he began to murmur, some good old soldier clapped him on the back, saying, "Cheer up, lad, it is a kingdom you are to strive for; if we faint not, henceforth there is laid up for us a great reward;

we have the *King's* word for it, man."—William observed that to those who truly believed this, their labors were as nothing; but he himself did not at the bottom believe it; and it was observed of all the soldiers who failed, the true cause was, that they did not really believe the *King's* promise. He was surprised to see that the soldiers, who used to bluster, and boast, and deride the assaults of the enemy, now began to fall away; while such as had faithfully obeyed the *King's* orders, and believed in his word, were sustained in the hour of trial. Those who had trusted in their own strength, all fainted in the slightest attack, while those who had put on the armour of the *King's* providing, *the sword*, and *the shield*, and *the helmet*, and *the breast-plate*, and whose *feet were shod* according to order, now endured hardships as good soldiers, and were enabled to *fight the good fight*.

An engagement was expected immediately. The men were ordered to prepare for battle. While the rest of the corps were so preparing, William's whole thoughts were bent on contriving how he might desert. But, alas! he was watched on all sides; he could not possibly devise any means to escape. The danger increased every moment—the battle came on. William, who had been so sure and confident before he entered, flinched in the moment of trial; while his more quiet and less boastful comrades, prepared boldly to do their duty. William looked about on all sides, and saw that there was no eye upon him, for he did not know that the *King's* eye was every where at once. He at last thought he spied a chance of escaping, not from the enemy, but from his own army. While he was endeavoring to escape, a ball from the opposite camp took off his

leg. As he fell, the first words which broke from him were, "while I was in duty I was preserved; in the very act of deserting I am wounded." He lay expecting every moment to be trampled to death, but as soon as the confusion was a little over, he was taken off the field by some of his own party, laid in a place of safety, and left to himself, after his wound was dressed.

The skirmish, for it proved nothing more, was soon over. The greater part of the regiment escaped in safety, while the few who fell, rejoiced that they fell in their duty. William, in the mean time, suffered cruelly both in mind and body. To the pains of a wounded soldier, he added the disgrace of a coward, and the infamy of a deserter. "O," cried he, "why was I such a fool as to leave the *great family* I lived in, where there was meat and drink enough and to spare, only on account of a little quarrel? I might have made up that with them as we had done our former quarrels. Why did I leave a life of ease and pleasure, where I had only a little rub now and then, for a life of daily discipline, and constant danger? Why did I turn soldier? O, what a miserable animal is a soldier!"

As he was sitting in this weak and disabled condition, uttering the above complaints, he observed a venerable old officer, with thin grey locks on his head, and on his face deep wrinkles engraved by time, and many an honest scar inflicted by war. William had heard this old officer highly commended for his extraordinary courage and conduct in battle, and in peace he used to see him cool and collected, devoutly employed in reading and praying, in the interval of more active duties. He could not help comparing this officer with himself, "I," said

he, "flinched and drew back, and would even have deserted in the moment of peril; and now, in return, I have no consolation in the hour of repose and safety. I would not fight then, I cannot pray now. O, why did I ever think of being a soldier?" He then began afresh to weep and lament, and he groaned so loud, that he drew the notice of the officer, who came up to him, kindly sat down by him, took him by the hand, and enquired with as much affection as if he had been his brother, what was the matter with him, and what particular distress, more than the common fortune of war, it was which drew from him such bitter groans? "I know something of surgery," added he, "let me examine your wound, and assist you with such little comforts as I can."

William at once saw the difference between the soldiers in the *King's army*, and the people in the *great family;* the latter commonly withdrew their kindness in sickness and trouble, when most wanted, which was just the very time when the others came forward to assist. He told the officer his little history, the manner of his living in the *great family*, the trifling cause of his quarrelling with it, the slight ground of his entering into the *King's* service. "Sir," said he, "I quarrelled with the family, and I thought I was at once fit for the army: I did not know the qualifications it required.—I had not reckoned on discipline, hardships, and self-denial. I liked well enough to sing a loyal song, or drink the King's health, but I find I do not relish working and fighting for him, though I rashly promised even to lay down my life for his service if called upon, when I took the bounty money and the oath of allegiance.—In short, Sir, I find that I long for the ease and sloth,

the merriment and the feasring, of my old service ; I find I cannot be a soldier, and to speak truth, I was in the very act of deserting, when I was stopt short by the cannon ball. So that I feel the guilt of deserting, and the misery of having lost my leg into the bargain."

The officer thus replied : "your state is that of every worldly, irreligious man. The *great family* you served is a just picture of the WORLD. The wages the world promises to those who are willing to do its work, are high, but the payment is attended with much disappointment; nay, the world, like your great family, is in itself insolvent, and in its very nature incapable of making good the promises, and of paying the high rewards which it holds out to tempt its credulous fellowers. The ungodly world, like your family, cares little for church, and still less for prayers; and considers the bible rather as an instrument to make an oath binding, in order to keep the vulgar in obedience, than as containing in itself a perfect rule of faith and practice, and as a title-deed to heaven. The generality of men love the world as you did your service, while it smiles upon them, and gives them easy work, and plenty of meat and drink; but as soon as it begins to cross and contradict them, they get out of humour with it, just as you did with your service. They then think its drudgery hard, its rewards low. They find out that it is high in its expectations from them, and slack in its payments to them. And they begin to fancy (because they do not hear religious people murmur as they do) that there must be some happiness in religion. The world, which takes no account of their deeper sins, at length brings them into discredit for some act of imprudence, just as your family over-

looked your lying and swearing, but threatened to drub you for breaking a china dish; such is the judgment of the world; it particularly bears with those who only break the laws of God, but severely punishes the smallest negligence by which property is injured. The world sooner pardons the breaking ten commandments of God, than even a china dish of its own.

"After some cross or opposition, worldly men, as I said before, begin to think how much content and cheerfulness they remember to have seen in religious people. They therefore begin to fancy that religion must be an easy and delightful as well as a good thing. They have heard that *her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;* and they persuade themselves that by this is meant worldly pleasantness and sensual peace. They resolve at length to try it, to turn their back upon the world, to engage in the service of God, and turn Christian; just as you resolved to leave your old service, to enter into the service of the King, and turn soldier. But as you quitted your place in a passion, so they leave the world in a huff. They do not count the cost. They do not calculate upon the darling sins, the habitual pleasures, the ease and vanities, which they undertake by their new engagements to renounce, any more than you counted what indulgences you were going to give up, when you quitted the luxuries and idleness of your place to enlist in the soldiers welfare.—They have, as I said, seen Christians cheerful, and they mistook the ground of their cheerfulness; they fancied it arose, not because, through grace they had conquered difficulties, but because they had no difficulties in their passage. They fancied that religion found the road smooth,

whereas, it only helps to bear with a rough road without complaint. They do not know that these Christians are of good cheer, not because the world is free from tribulation, but because Christ, their captain, has *overcome the world.* But the irreligious man, who has only seen the outside of a Christian in his worldly intercourse, knows little of his secret conflicts, his trials, his self-denials, his warfare with the world without, and with his own corrupt desires within.

"The irreligious man quarrels with the world, on some such occasion as you did with your place. He now puts on the outward forms and ceremonies of religion, and assumes the badges of Christianity, just as you were struck with the shows of a field-day; just as you were pleased with the music and the marching, and put on the cockade and the red coat. All seems smooth for a little while. He goes through the outward exercises of a Christian, a degree of credit attends his new profession, but he never suspects there is either difficulty or discipline attending it; he fancies religion is a thing for talking about, and not a thing of the heart and the life. He never suspects that all the psalm-singing he joins in, and the sermons he hears, and the other means he is using, are only, as the exercises and the evolutions of the soldiers, to fit and prepare him for actual service; and that these means are no more religion itself, than the exercises and evolutions of your parade, were real warfare.

"At length, some trial arises. This nominal Christian is called to differ from the world in some great point; something happens which may strike at his comfort, or his credit, or security. This cools his zeal for religion, just as the view of an engagement

cooled your courage as a soldier. He finds he was only angry with the world; he was not tired of it. He was out of humour with the world, not because he had seen through its vanity and emptiness, but because the world was out of humour with him. He finds that it is an easy thing to be a fair weather Christian, bold where there is nothing to be done, and confident where there is nothing to be feared. Difficulties unmask him to others; temptations unmask him to himself; he discovers that, though he is a high professor, he is no Christian; just as you found out that your red coat and your cockade, your shoulder knot and your musket, did not prevent you from being a coward.

"Your misery in the military life, like that of the nominal Christian, arose from your love of ease, your cowardice, and your self-ignorance. You rushed into a new way of life, without trying after one qualification for it. A total change of heart and temper was necessary for your new calling. With new views and new principles, the soldier's life would have been, not only easy, but delightful to you. But, while with a new profession, you retained your old nature, it is no wonder all discipline seemed intolerable to you.

"The true Christian, like the brave soldier, is supported under dangers by a strong faith that the fruits of that victory, for which he fights, will be safety and peace.—But, alas! the pleasures of this world are present and visible; the kingdom and the crown for which he strives, are remote. He is therefore apt to think them uncertain. He is therefore apt to fail, because nothing short of a lively faith can outweigh the present temptation, and teach him to prefer the joys of conquest to the pleasures of sloth."

Whether William went back to his old service, or was received again into the army, we do not know.

Allegory II.—*The Grand Trial.*

There was in a certain country a great king, who was also a judge. He was very merciful, but he was also very just; for he used to say that justice was the foundation of all goodness. His subjects were apt enough, in a general way, to extol his merciful temper, and especially those subjects who were always committing crimes, which made them liable to be punished by his justice. This last quality, they constantly kept out of sight, till they had cheated themselves into a notion that he was too good to punish at all.

Now it happened a long time before, that this whole people had broken their allegiance, and had forfeited the king's favor, and had also fallen from a very prosperous state in which he had placed them, having one and all become bankrupts; but when they were thus deeply in debt, and had nothing to pay, the king's son most generously took the whole burden of the debts on himself; and, in short, it was proposed, that all their affairs should be settled, and their very crimes forgiven (for they were criminals as well as debtors) provided only they would show themselves to be sorry for what they had done, themselves, and be thankful for what was done for them. I should however remark, that a book was also given them, in which a true and faithful account of

their own rebellion was written; and of the manner of obtaining the king's pardon, together with a variety of directions for their conduct in time to come; and in this book, it was particularly mentioned, that, after having lived a certain number of years in a part of the same king's country, and under his eye and jurisdiction, there should be a Grand Trial, when every one was to be publicly tried for his past behavior, and after this trial was over, certain heavy punishments were to be inflicted on those who should have still persisted in their rebellion, and certain high premiums were to be bestowed, as a gracious reward, upon the obedient.

It may be proper here to notice, that this king's court differed in some respects from our courts of justice, being, indeed, a sort of court of appeal, to which questions were carried after they had been imperfectly decided in the common courts. And, although with us all criminals are tried (and very properly, in my opinion) by a jury of their equals, yet in this king's country, the mode was very different; for, since, every one of the people had been in a certain sense, criminals, the king did not think it fair to make them judges also. It would, indeed, have been impossible to follow, in all respects, the customs which prevail with us, for the crimes with which men are charged in our courts, are mere "overt acts," as the lawyers call them, that is, acts which regard the outward behavior; such as the acts of striking, maiming, stealing, and so forth. But in the king's court it was not merely outward sins, but sins of the heart also, which were to be punished. Many a crime, therefore, which was never heard of in our common courts, was here to be brought to light, and was reserved for this great day. Among these were pride, and

oppression, and envy, and malice, and revenge, and covetousness, and secret vanity of mind, and evil thoughts of all sorts, and all evil wishes and desires. When covetousness, indeed, put men on committing robbery, or when malice drove them to an act of murder, then the common courts immediately judged the criminal, without waiting for this Great Trial; nevertheless, since even a thief and murderer would, now and then, escape in the common courts, for want of evidence, or through some fault or other of the judge or jury, the escape was of little moment to the poor criminal, for he was sure to be tried again by this great king; and even though the man should have been punished in some sense before, yet he had now a farther punishment to bear, unless, indeed, he was one of those who had obtained, by the means I before spoke of, this great king's pardon. The sins of the heart, however, were by far the most numerous sort of sins, which were to come before this great tribunal; and these were to be judged by this great king in person, and by none but himself; because he possessed a certain power of getting at all secrets.

I once heard of a certain king of Sicily, who built a whispering gallery in the form of an ear, through which he could hear every word that his rebellious subjects uttered, though spoken ever so low. But this secret of the king of Sicily, was nothing to what this great king possessed; for he had the power of knowing every thought which was conceived in the mind, though it never broke out into words, or proceeded to actions.

Now you may be ready to think, perhaps, that these people were worse off than any others, because they were to be examined so closely, and

judged so strictly. Far from it : the king was too just to expect bricks without giving them straw; he gave them, therefore, every help that they needed. He gave them a book of directions, as I before observed; and, because they were naturally short-sighted, he supplied them with a glass for reading it, and thus the most dim-sighted might see, if they did not wilfully shut their eyes; but, though the king *invited* them to open their eyes, he did not *compel* them; and many remained blind all their lives with the book in their hand, because they would not use the glass, nor take the proper means for reading and understanding all that was written for them. The humble and sincere, learned in time to see even that part of the book, which was least plainly written; and it was observed that the ability to understand it, depended more on the heart than the head; an evil disposition blinded the sight, while humble docility made every thing clear.

Now, it happened, that those who had been so lucky as to escape the punishment of the lower courts, took it into their heads, that they were all a very good sort of people, and of course very safe from any danger at this Great Trial. This grand intended trial, indeed, had been talked of so much, and put off so long, (for it had seemed long at least to these short-sighted people), that many persuaded themselves that it would never take place at all; and far the greater part were living away, therefore, without ever thinking about it; they went on just as if nothing at all had been done for their benefit; and as if they had no king to please, no king's son to be thankful to, no book to guide themselves by, and as if the Trial were never to come about.

But, with this king *a thousand years were as one day, for he was not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness.* So, at length, the solemn period approached. Still, however, the people did not prepare for the solemnity, or rather, they prepared for it much as some of the people in our towns are apt to prepare for Court ; I mean by balls and feastings, and they saw their own trial come on, with as little concern as is felt by the people in our streets, when they see the judge's procession enter the town, who, indeed, comfort themselves that it is only those in the prisons who are guilty.

But when at last, the day came, and every man found that he was to be judged for himself, and that some how or other, all his secrets were brought out, and that there was now no escape, things began to take a more serious turn. Some of the worst of the criminals were got together debating in an outer court of the Grand Hall, and there they passed their time, not in compunction, with tears, not in comparing their lives with what was required in that book which had been given them, but in comparing themselves with such as had been still more notorious offenders.

One who had grown wealthy by rapine and oppression, but had contrived to keep within the letter of the law, insulted a poor fellow as a thief, because he had stolen a loaf of bread. "You were far wickeder than I was," said a citizen to his apprentice, "for you drank and swore at the tavern every Sunday night." "Yes," said the poor fellow, "but it was your fault that I did so, for you took no care of my soul, but spent all your Sabbaths in jaunting abroad, or in rioting at home ; I might have learned, but there was no one to teach me ; I might have followed a

good example, but I saw only bad ones. I sinned against less light than you did." A drunken journeyman, who had spent all his wages on gin, took comfort that he had not spent a great estate in bribery at elections, as the lord of his manor had done, while a perjured elector boasted that he was no drunkard, like the journeyman.

I have not room to describe the awful pomp of the court, nor the terrible sounding of the trumpet which attended the judge's entrance, nor the sitting of the judge, nor the opening of the books, nor the crowding of the millions, who stood before him. I shall pass over the multitudes who were tried and condemned to dungeons, and chains, and to perpetual banishment from the presence of the king, which always seemed to be the saddest part of the sentence. I shall only notice further, a few who brought some plea of merit, and claimed a right to be rewarded by the king, and even deceived themselves so far as to think that his own book of laws would be their justification.

A thoughtless spendthrift advanced without any contrition, and said, "that he had lived handsomely, and had *hated the covetous whom God abhorreth*, and that he trusted in that passage of the book which said, that *covetousness was idolatry;* and that he therefore hoped for a favorable sentence." Now it proved that this man had not only avoided covetousness, but that he had even left his wife and children in want through his excessive prodigality. The judge, therefore, immediately pointed to that place in the book where it is written, *he that provideth not for his household is worse than an Infidel. He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth; thou*, said he, *in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and now thou must be tormented.*

Then a miser, whom hunger and hoarding had worn to skin and bone, crept forward, and praised the sentence passed on this extravagant youth. "Surely," said he, "since he is condemned, I am the man that may make some plea to favor.—I was never idle or drunk, I kept my body in subjection. I have been so self-denying, that I am certainly a saint: I have loved neither father, nor mother, nor wife, nor children, to excess; in all this I have obeyed the book of the law." Then the judge said, "*but where are thy works of mercy, and thy labors of love?* See that family which perished in thy sight the last hard winter, while thy barns were overflowing; that poor family were my representatives, yet *they were hungry, and thou gavest them no meat. Go to, now, thou rich man, weep and howl for the miseries that are come upon you. Your gold and your silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.*"

There came up next, one with a most self-sufficient air. He walked up boldly, having in one hand the plan of an hospital which he had built, and in the other the drawing of a statue which was erecting for him in the country that he had just left, and on his forehead appeared in gold letters, the list of all the public charities to which he had subscribed. He seemed to take great pleasure in the condemnation of the miser, and said, *Lord, where saw I thee hungry, and fed thee not, or in prison and visited thee not? I have visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction.* Here the judge cut him short by saying, "True, thou didst visit the fatherless, but didst thou fulfil equally that other part of my command, *to keep thyself unspotted from the world?* No, thou wert conformed to the world in many of

its sinful customs, *thou didst follow a multitude to do evil; thou didst love the world and the things of the world;* and the motive to all thy charities was not a regard to me, but to thy own credit with thy fellow-men. Thou hast done every thing for the sake of reputation, and now thou art vainly trusting in thy works, instead of putting all thy trust in my Son, who has offered himself to be a surety for thee. Where has been that humility and gratitude to him which was required of thee? No, thou wouldst be thine own surety: thou hast trusted in thyself: thou hast made thy boast of thine own goodness: thou hast sought after, and thou hast enjoyed, the praise of men, and verily, I say unto thee, *thou hast had thy reward.*"

A poor, diseased, blind cripple, from the very hospital which this great man had built, then fell prostrate on his face, crying out, *Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!* on which the judge, to the surprise of all, said, *well done good and faithful servant.* The poor man replied, "Lord, I have done nothing!" "But thou hast suffered well," said the judge; "thou hast been an example of patience and meekness, and though thou hadst but few talents, yet thou hast well improved those few; thou hadst time; this thou didst spend in the humble duties of thy station, and also in earnest prayer, even for that proud founder of thine hospital, who never prayed for himself; thou wast indeed blind and lame, but, it is no where said, 'My Son, give me thy feet or thine eyes, but, *give me thine heart;*' and even the faculties I did grant thee, were employed to my glory; with thine ears, thou didst listen to my word, with thy tongue, thou didst show forth my praise; *enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*"

There were several who came forward, and boasted of some single and particular virtue, in which they had been supposed to excel. One talked of his generosity, another of his courage, and a third of his fortitude ; but it proved, on a close examination, that some of those supposed virtues were merely the effect of a particular constitution of body ; that others proceeded from a false motive, and that not a few of them were actual vices, since they were carried to excess ; and under the pretence of fulfilling one duty, some other duty was lost sight of ; in short, these partial virtues were none of them exercised in obedience to the will of the king, but merely to please the person's own humour, and they would not, therefore, stand this day's trial, for *he that had kept the whole law, and yet had wilfully and habitually offended in any one point, was declared guilty of breaking the whole.*

At this moment, a sort of thick scales fell from the eyes of the multitude. They could now no longer take comfort by measuring their neighbor's conduct against their own. Each, at once, saw himself in his true light, and found, alas ! when it was too late, that he should have made the book which had been given him, his rule of practice before, since it now, proved to be the rule by which he was to be judged. Nay, every one now thought himself even worse than his neighbor, because, while he only saw and heard of the guilt of others, he felt his own in all its aggravated horrors.

To complete their confusion, they were compelled to acknowledge the justice of the judge who condemned them ; and also to approve the favorable sentence by which thousands of other criminals had not only their lives saved, but were made happy and

glorious beyond all imagination, and all this was in consequence of their sincere repentance, and their humble acceptance of the pardon offered to them by the king's son. One thing was remarkable, that whilst most of those who were condemned, never expected condemnation, but even claimed a reward for their supposed innocence or goodness; all who were really rewarded and forgiven, were sensible that they owed every thing to a mere act of grace, and they cried out with one voice, *not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise ! ! !*

Allegory III.—*Bear ye one another's Burthens; or, The Valley of Tears.*

Once upon a time, methought I set out upon a long journey, and the place through which I travelled, appeared to be a dark valley, which was called the Valley of Tears. It had obtained this name, not only on account of the many sorrowful adventures which poor passengers commonly meet with in their journey through it, but also because most of these travellers entered it weeping and crying, and left it in very great pain and anguish. This vast Valley was full of people of all colors, ages, sizes, and descriptions. But, whether white or black, or tawney, all were travelling the same road; or, rather, they were taking different little paths, which all led to the same common end.

Now, it was remarkable, that notwithstanding the different complexions, ages, and tempers of this vast

variety of people, yet all resembled each other in this one respect, that each had a burthen on his back, which he was destined to carry through the toil and heat of the day, until he should arrive by a longer or shorter course at his journey's end. These burthens would, in general, have made the pilgrimage quite intolerable, had not the Lord of the Valley, out of his great compassion for these poor pilgrims, provided, among other things, the following means for their relief :

In their full view over the entrance of the Valley, there were written in great letters the following words :

Bear ye one another's burthens.

Now I saw in my vision that many of the travellers hurried on without stopping to read this instruction, and others, though they had once read it, yet paid little or no attention to it. A third sort thought it very good advice for other people, but very seldom applied it to themselves. In short, I saw that too many of those people were of opinion that they had burthens enough of their own, and that there was therefore no occasion to take upon them those of others; so each tried to make his own load as light, and his journey as pleasant as he could, without so much as once casting a thought on a poor over-loaded neighbor. Here, however, I have to make a rather singular remark, by which I shall plainly show the folly of these selfish people. It was so ordered and contrived by the Lord of this Valley, that if any one stretched out his hand to lighten a neighbor's burthen, in fact he never failed to find, that he at that moment also lightened his own. Besides, the obligation to help each other, and the benefit of doing so, were mutual. If a man helped his

neighbor, it commonly happened that some other neighbor came by-and-by and helped him in his turn; for there was no such thing as what we call *independence* in the whole Valley. Not one of all these travellers, however stout and strong, could move on comfortably without assistance, for so the Lord of the Valley, whose laws were all of them kind and good, had expressly ordained.

I stood still to watch the progress of these poor wayfaring people, who moved slowly on, like so many ticket porters, with burthens of various kinds on their backs; of which some were heavier, and some were lighter, but from a burden of one kind or other, not one traveller was entirely free.

A sorrowful widow, oppressed with the burthen of grief for the loss of an affectionate husband, would have been bowed down by her heavy load, had not the surviving children with great alacrity stepped forward and supported her. Their kindness, after a while, so much lightened the load, which threatened at first to be intolerable, that she even went on her way with cheerfulness.

I next saw a poor old man tottering under a burthen so heavy, that I expected him every moment to sink under it. I peeped into his pack, and saw it was made up of many sad articles; there was poverty, oppression, sickness, debt, and what made by far the heaviest part, undutiful children. I was wondering how it was that he got on even so well as he did, till I spied his wife, a kind, meek, Christian woman, who was doing her utmost to assist him. She quietly got behind, gently laid her shoulder to the burthen, and carried a much larger proportion of it than appeared to me when I was at a distance. She not only sustained him by her strength, but

cheered him by her counsels. She told him that *through much tribulation we must enter into rest*, that *he that overcometh shall inherit all things*. In short, she so supported his fainting spirit, that he was enabled to *run with patience the race that was set before him*.

An infirm blind woman was creeping forward with a very heavy burthen, in which were packed sickness and want, with numberless other of those raw materials, out of which human misery is worked up. She was so weak, that she could not have got on at all, had it not been for the kind assistance of another woman, almost as poor as herself; who, though she had no light burthen of her own, cheerfully lent an helping hand to a fellow-traveller who was still more heavily laden. This friend had indeed little or nothing to give, but the very voice of kindness is soothing to the weary. And I remarked in many other cases, that it was not so much the degree of the help afforded, as the manner of helping, that lightened the burthens. Some had a coarse, rough, clumsy way of assisting a neighbor, which, though in fact it might be of real use, yet seemed, by galling the travellers, to add to the load it was intended to lighten; while I observed in others, that so cheap a kindness as a mild word, or even an affectionate look, made a poor burthened wretch move on cheerily. The bare feeling that some human being cared for him, seemed to lighten the load. But to return to this kind neighbor. She had a little old book in her hand, the covers of which were worn out by much use. When she saw the blind woman ready to faint, she would read her a few words out of this book, such as the following: *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Blessed*

are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.—I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

A pious Minister, sinking under the weight of a distressed parish, whose worldly wants he was totally unable to bear, was suddenly relieved by a good widow, who came up and took all the sick and hungry on her own shoulders. The burthen of the parish, thus divided, became tolerable. The minister, being no longer bowed down by the temporal distresses of his people, applied himself cheerfully to his own part of the weight. And it was pleasant to see how those two persons, neither of them very strong, or rich, or healthy, by thus kindly uniting together, were enabled to bear the weight of a whole parish; though singly, either of them must have sunk under the attempt. And I remember one great grief I felt during my whole journey was, that I did not see more of this union and concurring kindness by which all the burthens might have been so easily divided. It troubled me to observe, that of all the laws of the Valley, there was not one more frequently broken than *the law of kindness.*

I now spied a swarm of poor black men, women and children, a multitude which no man could number; these groaned and toiled, and sweated, and bled under far heavier loads than I had yet seen. But for a while no man helped them; at length a few white travellers were touched with the sorrowful sighing of those millions, and very heartily did they put their hands to the burthens; but their number was not quite equal to the work they had undertaken. I perceived, however, that they never lost sight of those poor heavy-laden wretches, and as

the number of these generous helpers increased I felt a comfortable hope, that before all the blacks got out of the Valley, the whites would fairly divide the burthen, and the loads would be effectually lightened.

Among the travellers, I had occasion to remark, that those who most kicked and struggled under their burthens, only made them so much the heavier; for their shoulders became extremely galled by those vain struggles. The load, if borne patiently, would in the end have turned even to the advantage of the bearers (for so the Lord of the Valley had kindly decreed) but as to these grumblers, they had all the smart, and none of the benefit. But the thing which made all these burthens seem so very heavy was, that in every one, without exception, there was a certain *inner pacquet*, which most of the travellers took pains to conceal, and carefully wrap up; and while they were forward enough to complain of the other part of their burthens, few said a word about this; though in truth it was the pressing weight of this *secret pacquet* which served to render the general burthen so intolerable. In spite of all their caution, I contrived to get a peep at it; I found in each, that this pacquet had the same label: the word Sin was written on all as a general title, and in ink so black, that they could not wash it out. I observed that most of them took no small pains to hide the writing; but I was surprised to see that they did not try to get rid of the load, but the label. If any kind friend, who assisted these people in bearing their burthens, did but so much as hint at the *secret pacquet*, or advise them to get rid of it, they took fire at once, and commonly denied they had any such article in their portmanteau; and it

was those whose *secret pacquet* swelled to the most enormous size, who most stoutly denied they had any.

I saw with pleasure, however, that some, who had long labored heartily to get rid of this inward pacquet, at length found it much diminished, and the more this pacquet shrunk in size, the lighter was the other part of their burthens also.

Then, methought, all at once, I heard a voice, as it had been the voice of an angel, crying out and saying, "Ye unhappy pilgrims, why are ye troubled about the burthen which ye are doomed to bear through this Valley of Tears? Know ye not that as soon as ye shall have escaped out of this Valley, the whole burthen shall drop off, provided ye neglect not to remove that inward weight of SIN which principally oppresses you? Study then the whole will of the Lord of this Valley. Learn from him how this heavy part of your burthens may now be lessened, and how, at last, it shall be removed for ever Be comforted. Faith and hope may cheer you even in this Valley. The passage, though it seems long to weary travellers, is comparatively short; for beyond it there is a land of everlasting rest, where ye shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; where ye shall be led by living fountains of waters, and all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes."

Allegory IV.—*The Strait Gate, and the Broad Way*

Now I had another vision of what was passing in *the Valley of Tears.* Methought I saw again the same kind of travellers whom I had seen in the former part, and they were wandering at large through the same vast wilderness. At first setting out on his journey, each traveller had a lamp so fixed in his bosom, that it seemed to make a part of himself, but as this *natural light* did not prove to be sufficient to direct them in the right way, the king of the country, in pity to their wanderings and their blindness, out of his gracious condescension, promised to give these poor way-faring people an additional supply of light from his own Royal Treasury. But as he did not choose to lavish his favors where there seemed no disposition to receive them, he would not bestow any of his oil on such as did not think it worth asking for. *Ask and ye shall have*, was the rule he laid down for them. Many were prevented from asking through pride, for they thought they had light enough already, preferring the feeble glimmerings of their own lamp to all the light in the king's treasury. Yet it was observed of those who rejected it, as thinking they had enough, that hardly any acted up to what even their own light showed them. Others were deterred from asking, because they were told that it not only pointed out the dangers and difficulties of the road, but by a certain reflecting power, it turned inward on themselves, and revealed to them ugly sights in their own hearts, to which they rather chose to be blind; for those travellers *chose darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* Now it was remarkable that these

two properties were inseparable, and that the lamp would be of little outward use, except to those who used it as an internal reflector. A threat and a promise also never failed to accompany the offer of this light from the king, a promise that to those who improved what they had, *more should be given, and a threat, that from those who did not use it wisely, should be taken away even what they had.*

I observed that when the road was very dangerous, when terrors and difficulties and death beset the faithful travellers, then on their fervent importunity, the king voluntarily gave large and bountiful supplies of light, such as in common seasons never could have been expected; always proportioning the quantity given to the necessity of the case; *as their day was, such was their light and strength.*

Though many chose to depend entirely on their own lamp, yet it was observed that this light was apt to go out if left to itself. It was easily blown out by those violent gusts which were perpetually howling through the wilderness, and indeed it was the natural tendency of that unwholsome atmosphere to extinguish it, just as you have seen a candle go out when exposed to the vapours and foul air of a damp room. It was a melancholy sight to see multitudes of travellers heedlessly pacing on, boasting that they had light enough, and despising the offer of more. But what astonished me most of all was, to see many, and some of them too, accounted men of first rate wit, actually busy in blowing out their own light, because, while any spark of it remained, it only served to torment them, and point out things which they did not wish to see. And having once blown out their own light, they were not easy till they had blown out that of their neighbor's also; so

that a good part of the wilderness seemed to exhibit a sort of universal *blindman's buff*, each endeavoring to catch his neighbor, while his own voluntary blindness exposed him to be caught himself, so that each was actually falling into the snare he was laying for another, till at length, as selfishness is the natural consequence of blindness, "catch he that catch can," became the general cry throughout the wilderness.

Now I saw in my vision that there were some others who were busy in strewing the most gaudy flowers over the numerous bogs, precipices, and pit-falls, with which the wilderness abounded, and thus making danger and death look so gay, that poor thoughtless creatures seemed to delight in their own destruction. Those pit-falls did not appear deep or dangerous, because over them were raised gay edifices with alluring names, in which were singing men and singing women, and dancing, and feasting, and gambling, and drinking, and jollity, and madness. But though the scenery was gay, the footing was unsound. The floors were full of holes, through which the unthinking merry-makers were continually sinking. Some tumbled through in the middle of a song, many at the end of a feast, and though there was many a cup of intoxication wreathed with flowers, yet there was always poison at the bottom. But what most surprised me was, that though no day passed over their heads in which some of those merry-makers did not drop through, yet their loss made little impression on those who were left. Nay, instead of being awakened to more circumspection and self-denial, by the continual dropping off of those about them, several of them seemed to borrow from thence an argument of a direct contrary tendency,

and the very shortness of the time was only urged as a reason to use it more sedulously for indulgence in sensual delights. *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they are withered.* With these, and a thousand other such little mottos, the gay garlands of the wilderness were decorated. Some admired poets were set to work to put the most corrupt sentiments into the most harmonious tunes; these were sung without scruple, chiefly, indeed, by the looser sons of riot, but not seldom also by the more orderly daughters of sobriety, who were not ashamed to sing to the sound of instruments, sentiments so corrupt and immoral, that they would have blushed to speak or read them; but the music seemed to sanctify the corruption, especially such as was connected with love or drinking.

Now I observed that all the travellers who had so much as a spark of light left, seemed every now and then, as they moved onwards, to cast an eye, though with very different degrees of attention, towards the *happy land*, which they were told lay at the end of their journey; but as they could not see very far forward, and as they knew there was a *dark and shadowy valley* which must needs be crossed before they could attain to the *happy land*, they tried to turn their attention from it as much as they could. The truth is, they were not sufficiently apt to consult a map which the king had given them, and which pointed out the road to the happy land so clearly, that *the way-faring men, though simple, could not err.* This map also defined very correctly the boundaries of the *happy land* from the *land of misery*, both of which lay on the other side of the *dark and shadowy valley;* but so many beacons and light-houses

were erected, so many clear and explicit directions furnished for avoiding the one country, and attaining the other, that it was not the king's fault, if even one single traveller got wrong. But I am inclined to think, that in spite of the map, and the king's word, and his offers of assistance to get them thither, the travellers in general did not heartily and truly believe after all, that there was any such country as the *happy land;* or at least, the paltry and transient pleasures of the wilderness so besotted them, the thoughts of the *dark and shadowy valley* so frightened them, that they thought they should be more comfortable by banishing all thought and forecast.

Now I also saw in my dream, that there were two roads through the wilderness, one of which every traveller must needs take. The first was narrow and difficult, and rough, but it was infallibly safe. It did not admit the traveller to stray either to the right hand or the left, yet it was far from being destitute of real comforts or sober pleasures. The other was a *broad and tempting way*, abounding with luxurious fruits and gaudy flowers to tempt the eye, and please the appetite. To forget this dark valley, through which every traveller was well assured he must one day pass, seemed indeed the object of general desire. To this grand end, all that human ingenuity could invent, was industriously set to work The travellers read, and they wrote, and they painted, and they sung, and they danced, and they drank as they went along, not so much because they all cared for these things, or had any real joy in them, as because this restless activity served to divert their attention from ever being fixed on the *dark and shadowy valley.*

The king, who knew the thoughtless temper of the travellers, and how apt they were to forget their journey's end, had thought of a thousand little kind attentions to warn them of their dangers. And as we sometimes see in our gardens written on a board in great letters, BEWARE OF SPRING GUNS—TRAPS ARE SET HERE : so had this king caused to be written and stuck up before the eyes of the travellers, several like notices and cautions, such as *broad is the way that leadeth to destruction—Take heed lest ye also perish—Woe to them that rise up early to drink wine—The pleasures of sin are but for a season*, &c. Such were the notices directed to the *broad way* travellers, but they were so busily engaged in plucking the flowers, sometimes before they were blown, and in devouring the fruits, often before they were ripe, and in loading themselves with *yellow clay*, under the weight of which millions perished, that they had no time so much as to look at the king's directions. Many went wrong, because they preferred a merry journey to a safe one, and were terrified by certain notices, chiefly intended for the *narrow-way* travellers, such as, *ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice;* but had these foolish people allowed themselves time or patience to read to the end, which they seldom would do, they would have seen these comfortable words added, *but your sorrows shall be turned into joy*, also, *your joy no man taketh from you, and they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

Now I also saw in my dream, that many travellers, who had a strong dread of ending at the *land of misery*, walked up to the *Strait Gate*, hoping, that though the entrance was narrow, yet if they could once get in, the road would widen; but what was their grief when on looking more closely, they

saw written on the inside, *narrow is the way;* this made them take fright, they compared the inscriptions with which the whole way was lined, such as *be ye not conformed to this world—deny yourselves —take up your cross,* with all the tempting pleasures of the wilderness. Some indeed recollected the fine descriptions they had read of the *happy land, the golden city, and the rivers of pleasure,* and they sighed : but then, those joys were distant, and from the faintness of their light, they soon got to think that what was remote might be uncertain, and while the present good increased in bulk by its nearness, the distant good receded, diminished, disappeared ! Their faith failed, they would trust no farther than they could see; they drew back and got into the *broad-way,* taking a common but sad refuge in the number and gaiety of their companions. When these faint-hearted people, who yet had set out well, turned back, their light was quite put out, and then they became worse than those who had made no attempt to get in. *For it is impossible,* that is, it is next to impossible, *for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance.*

A few honest humble travellers, not naturally stronger than the rest, but strengthened by their trust in the king's word, came up by the light of their lamps, and meekly entered in at the *Strait Gate;* and they advanced farther, they felt less heavy, and though the way did not in reality grow wider, yet they grew reconciled to the narrowness of it, especially when they saw the walls here and there studded with certain jewels, called *promises,* such as *he that endureth to the end shall be saved.* And

my grace is sufficient for you. Some, when they were almost ready to faint, were encouraged by seeing that many niches in the *narrow-way* were filled with statues and pictures of Saints and Martyrs, who had borne their testimony at the stake, that the *narrow-way* was the safe way; and these travellers, instead of sinking at the sight of the painted wheel and gibbet, the sword and the furnace, were animated by these words written under them, *those that wear white robes came out of great tribulation;* and, *be ye followers of those, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.*

In the mean time, there came a great multitude of travellers, all from *Laodicea;* this was the largest party I had yet seen; these were *neither hot nor cold,* they would not give up future hope, they could not endure present pain; so they contrived to deceive themselves by fancying that they resolved to keep the *happy land* in view, yet that there must needs be many different ways which led to it, no doubt all equally sure, without being all equally rough; so they set on foot little contrivances to attain the end without using the means, and softened down the spirit of the king's directions, to fit them to their own practice. Sometimes they would split a direction in two, and only use that half which suited them. For instance, when they met with the following rule—*Trust in the Lord and be doing good,* they would take the first half, and make themselves easy with a general sort of trust, that through the mercy of the king all would go well with them, though they themselves did nothing; and on the other hand, many made sure that a few good works of their own would do their business, and carry them safely to the *happy land,* though they did not trust

in the Lord, nor place any faith in his word. Thus, some perished by a lazy faith, and others by a working pride. A large party of *Pharisees* now appeared, who had so neglected their lamp, that they did not see their way at all, though they fancied themselves to be full of light; they kept up appearances so well as to delude others, and most effectually to delude themselves with a notion that they might be found in the right way at last. In this dreadful delusion they went on to the end, and till they were finally plunged in the dark valley, never discovered the horrors which awaited them on the dismal shore. It was remarkable, that while these Pharisees were often boasting how bright their light burnt, in order to get the praise of men, the humble travellers, whose steady light showed their good works to others, refused all commendation, and the brighter their light shined before men, so much the more they insisted that they ought to glorify not themselves, but *their Father which is in Heaven.*

I now set myself to observe what was the particular let, molestation, and hindrance, which obstructed particular travellers in their endeavors to enter in at the Strait Gate. I remarked a huge portly man who seemed desirous of getting in, but he carried about him such a vast provision of bags full of gold, and had on so many rich garments, which stuffed him out so wide, that though he pushed and squeezed, like one who had really a mind to get in, yet he could not possibly do so. Then I heard a voice crying, *woe to him that loadeth himself with thick clay.* The poor man felt something was wrong, and even went so far as to change some of his more cumbersome vanities into others which seemed less bulky, but still he and his pack were

much too wide for the gate. He would not, however, give up the matter so easily, but began to throw away a little of the coarser part of his baggage, but still I remarked that he threw away none of the vanities which lay near his heart. He tried again, but it would not do; still his dimensions were too large. He now looked up and read these words, *how hardly shall those who have riches enter into the Kingdom of God.* The poor man sighed to find it was impossible to enjoy his fill of both worlds, *and went away sorrowing.* If he ever afterwards cast a thought towards the *happy land*, it was only to regret that the road which led to it was too narrow to admit any but the meagre children of want, who were not so encumbered by wealth as to be too big for the passage. Had he read on, he would have seen that *with God all things are possible.*

Another advanced with much confidence of success, for having little worldly riches or honors, the gate did not seem so strait to him. He got to the threshold triumphantly, and seemed to look back with disdain on all that he was quitting. He soon found, however, that he was so bloated with pride, and stuffed out with self-sufficiency, that he could not get in. Nay, he was in a worse way than the rich man just named; for *he* was willing to throw away some of his outward luggage, whereas this man refused to part with a grain of that vanity and self-applause which made him too big for the way. The sense of his own worth so swelled him out, that he stuck fast in the *gateway*, and could neither get in nor out. Finding now that he must cut off all those big thoughts of himself if he wished to be reduced to such a size as to pass the gate, he gave up all thoughts of it. He scorned that humility and self-

denial which might have shrunk him down to the proper dimensions; the more he insisted on his own qualifications for entrance, the more impossible it became, for the bigger he grew. Finding that he must become quite another manner of man before he could hope to get in, he gave up the desire; and I now saw, that though when he set his face towards the *happy land*, he could not get an inch forward, yet the instant he made a motion to turn back into the world, his speed became rapid enough, and he soon got back into the *Broad-Way*.

Many, who for a time were brought from their usual bulk by some affliction, seemed to get in with ease. They now thought all their difficulties over, for, having been surfeited with the world, during their late disappointment, they turned their backs upon it willingly enough. A fit of sickness, perhaps, which is very apt to reduce, had for a time brought their bodies into subjection, so that they were able just to get in at the *gate-way;* but as soon as health and spirits returned, the way grew narrower and narrower to them; they could not get on, but turned short, and got back into the world. I saw many attempt to enter who were stopt short by a large burden of worldly cares; others by a load of idolatrous attachments; but I observed that nothing proved a more complete bar than that vast bundle of prejudices with which multitudes were loaded. Others were fatally obstructed by loads of bad habits which they would not lay down, though they knew it prevented their entrance. Some few, however, of most descriptions, who had kept their light alive, by craving constant supplies from the king's treasury, got through at last by a strength which they felt not to be their own. One poor man, who car-

ried the largest bundle of bad habits I had seen, could not get on a step; he never ceased, however, to implore for light enough to see where his misery lay; he threw down one of his bundles, then another, but all to little purpose; still he could not stir. At last striving as if in an agony (which is the true way of entering) he threw down the heaviest article in his pack; this was *selfishness;* the poor fellow felt relieved at once, his light burnt brightly, and the rest of his pack was as nothing.

Then I heard a great noise as of carpenters at work. I looked what this might be, and saw many sturdy travellers, who, finding they were too bulky to get through, took it into their heads not to reduce themselves, but to widen the gate; they hacked on this side, and hewed on that; but all their hacking, and hewing, and hammering, was to no purpose, they got only their labor for their pains; it was possible they might have reduced themselves, but they could not widen the way.

What grieved me most was, to observe that many who had got on successfully a good way, now stopped to rest, and to admire their own progress. While they were thus valuing themselves on their attainments, their light diminished. While these were boasting how far they had left others behind, who had set out much earlier, some slower travellers, whose beginning had not been so promising, but who had walked carefully, now outstripped them. These last walked, *not as though they had already attained; but this one thing they did, forgetting the things which were behind, they pushed forward toward the mark for the prize of their high calling.* These, though naturally weak, yet, *by laying aside every weight,* finished the race that was

set before them. Those who had kept their *light burning*, who *were not wise in their own conceit*, who *laid their help on one that is mighty*, who had *chosen to suffer affliction rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin*, came at length to the *happy land*. They had, indeed, *the dark and shadowy valley* to cross; but even there they found a *rod and a staff to comfort them*. Their light, instead of being put out by the damps of the valley of the shadow of death, often burnt with added brightness. Some, indeed, suffered the terrors of a short eclipse; but even then their light, like that of a dark lanthorn, was not put out; it was only hid for a while, and even these often finished their course with joy. But be that as it might, the instant they reached the *happy land*, all tears were wiped from their eyes, and the king himself came forth and welcomed them into his presence, and put a crown upon their heads, with these word, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Allegory V.—*The Captive. By Glinka.*

A BEAUTIFUL and noble maiden was once affianced to a youth of surpassing loveliness; when her father said to her, "It behoves, my child, that thy constancy be tried, that it be proved whether thou wilt remain faithful to thy betrothed, however thou mayst be assailed by temptation." He then commanded his servants to equip the young bride for a journey to a foreign and far distant land. This be

ing done, they brought her a golden cup filled with the water of oblivion. No sooner had she emptied the chalice than a lethargic sleep benumbed her senses, while some irresistible power, like that which is the property of the magnet, carried her away in her state of insensibility.—Scarcely was the farewell tear dry upon her cheek, ere the maiden awoke, and found herself beneath another heaven, and transported into an unknown region that seemed to her altogether another world.

She found herself no longer free as before, but a prisoner confined within a curiously constructed moving cage, fashioned by the hand of some skilful artificer—deprived of her liberty, but still retaining her will. Here she was given in charge to the guardianship of five attendants, who were appointed to be at once her gaolers and her slaves, and to act as the sole interpreters between her and all that surrounded her. Yet might she not trust them without extreme caution, as they were naturally inclined both to deceive and to be deceived. It was, however, the will of the maiden's father, that she should not regain her freedom before she clearly ascertained where she was, and understood for what purpose she had been sent thither. Another condition annexed to her present lot was, that she should not be liberated until such time as her prison-house should fall to pieces of itself, like ice that is thawed by the sunbeams; then—should she still retain the recollection of her former home, and of her destined bridegroom—who although born before the creation of time, was young and beauteous as the blush of morn;—should she still remember her noble origin and descent, awakening as from a deep slumber, she would find herself once more in the happy abode she

had quitted, and in the society of her beloved friends. Should she, on the contrary, forget all her former attachments, her pure and noble feelings, she would be doomed to endure still greater degradation.

Yet how was the poor captive to know either where she was, or for what purpose she was sent hither? so completely had the draught of oblivion effaced the recollection of her former glorious state. She had only some confused and indistinct reminiscence of what she had once been, and of that from which she was now separated—apparently for ever. For a long time she only gazed vacantly around her, scarcely seeing any object beyond herself: every thing alarmed, every thing astonished her. At length she began to distinguish, although very imperfectly, such objects as were immediately close to her; but perceived with grief that they only tended to strengthen and support the cage in which she was enclosed, and which now waxed firmer and firmer every day, as did likewise the fetters that bound her to this strange and unknown spot.

After a considerable interval, the captive became conscious of her power over her five attendants, and tried to fulfil one of the conditions attached to her banishment, namely, to discover, through their means, where it was that she was placed. She accordingly sent them out to explore in every direction, both high and low, and near and far. Obedient to her mandates, they flew away to execute them; but careless, or erring in their observations, and intent upon their own pleasures, they returned with false and deceitful intelligence. In order to obtain any trust worthy report, it was necessary that she should compare the testimony of one with that of another. What, too, tended greatly to impede

her in these researches was, that she was surrounded by a number of perverse and seductive enchantresses, who, from morning till night, would relate to her wondrous tales of her present abode, and insinuate that she was sent hither as a guest to a banquet, to partake of the indulgences that surrounded her. They discoursed to her merely of honors, of titles, of wealth, of enjoyment. Yet the innocent maiden yielded not to their allurements and specious counsel; but refused the proffered advantages, when she discovered that they could not be attained without staining her native purity. "No," exclaimed she, "these things are not esteemed in the country I have left, and whither I hope to return." But where is that beloved land? Alas! this was a question she herself could not answer. The enchantresses, in the meantime, ridiculed what they termed her fancies; censured, as absurd, her ideas both of her former state and of the future—the gloomy, doubtful future, and invited her to partake of the enjoyments now within her reach. They were seconded in all their seductive wiles by a skilful artist, who depicted, with the most beautiful tints, and with a voluptuous pencil, images of happiness, delight, and enjoyment. Still nothing was able completely to satisfy the melancholy captive, who dreaded to lose that which she could neither entirely forget nor clearly remember; and which, although she at times felt it with such consciousness, she could not describe. But some unseen guardian watched over and consoled her: frequently in the shadow of midnight when those her subtle seducers were lulled asleep, an invisible visitor hovered over her couch, and whispered to her, "Do not resign thyself to despondency." And this voice, though but heard

for a moment, and as fleeting as all else that is most fair in this life, sufficed to remind her of the ineffable delight it once had been her lot to enjoy.

Whatever was most touching in music, sublime in poetry, noble in art, appeared to her to be some reminiscence of her former state of existence, and affected her as powerfully, as a memorial of his distant native land, does the solitary stranger. The joy, however, that she felt on such occasions was quickly succeeded by vexation, as often as involuntary comparisons obtruded upon her. "Here," she exclaimed, "I am often compelled to hate; while in the happy region I have quitted, there was but one universal law, and that was—to love. There love ever breathed with the genial warmth of eternal spring; while here self-love constantly freezes the affections. There the thoughts and feelings of the heart were as palpable to sense as colors and sounds; here, on the contrary, we are obliged to make use of very imperfect expedients in order to express them—how many inanimate letters, how many ambiguous and obscure words are requisite to convey a single feeling, a single thought, however powerful be the one, or however luminous the other! I well remember, that in my former habitation there was neither yesterday, nor to-morrow, but existence was one continued day, uninterrupted by gloom or by night. Here how grudgingly is time bestowed, and on what mean uses is it employed! There whole ages seemed but as a minute, while spent in contemplating Him to whom I was then so near, and from whom I am now removed so far."

She admired the pictures of nature, and loved to contemplate their sublime beauty in the rolling storm, when the waters of the deep foam against

the granite rocks, and the creaking forests bend beneath the steps of the giant power that strides through the air. Yet was her bosom filled with a holier joy in the mild evenings of spring, when nature, like a young mother watching beside the cradle of her infant, breathes new life and fragrance over the new-born year;—when every flower is gemmed with dewy crystals that reflect the full-orbed moon, or the radiant stars. At such times she would exclaim, "Well does this brief moment of tranquillity remind me of that abode of ever-during peace, in which I once dwelt!"

Thus did the captive bride abandon herself to secret longings for her beloved: comparing herself to a ray of light immured in a dark fog, she endeavored to preserve her lustre unobserved. At length she succeeded in making herself acquainted with the place of her banishment; and now that she discovered how valueless are all its pretended treasures, she resisted the enticements of those who labored to seduce her, and no longer trusted their officious services, or their winning allurements. To their arts, or rather to her own frail desires, she now opposed the commands of her parent and the shield of truth. From this moment their blandishments were rendered ineffectual; for nothing that is corrupted with falsehood is able to pass through the gates of truth. It was then that for the first time she comprehended her own mysterious fate, and her lofty destination. But the term of her imprisonment was not yet completed! however powerfully she felt the recollections of her native region revive within her, she was so weakened by her captivity, that she had not sufficient force to break asunder the fetters that yet retained

her in durance. Still must she continue in bondage,—a prisoner and a slave.

But time hastened to work her release, and she perceived, with satisfaction, that the cage in which she was confined daily became weaker and weaker; while the enchantresses also desisted from their seductions; till at length she exclaimed in a voice of rapture, "The hour of my liberation is at hand!"

And lo! that prison which once seemed so firm, now threatens every instant to fall to pieces—its bars yielded almost to a touch. Even the captive herself became as much changed as her abode: wings seemed to grow from her shoulders. "I feel," she cried, "that I shall not much longer be separated from my betrothed. Soon—very soon, shall I fly to meet him,—fly, as a liberated dove, to his embrace; to the happy region of my birth; there will my affection be repaid; there will my patience obtain its reward."

CHAP. III.

1. The Garden of Eden; a Bible Lesson. 2. Sacred Imagery; another Bible Lesson.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

JAMES and Ellen, with their older sister, Martha, were sitting round the table one Sabbath evening, with their Bibles before them, ready to study their Sabbath school lessons.

"I wonder," said James, as he sat for some time, turning over the leaves of the Bible, with his elbow upon the table, and his head resting upon his hand—"I wonder what the people used to have to do in old times? It only tells in the Bible about their talking and having battles, and going about from one place to another."

"The Bible doesn't tell us what they were doing all the time, to be sure," said Ellen: "for it would take up the whole in telling about one war, if it did."

"No;" said James; "but I meant, I wondered if they didn't keep stores, or work at any trades."

"Why," said Martha, "what is said about the very first man that lived? He found enough to do even before there was another man in the world besides himself."

"Adam?" said Ellen, "why, I always imagine Adam and Eve, as walking about in the garden and not having any thing particular to do but to enjoy the prospect and to talk with each other."

"But," said Martha, "the Bible doesn't tell us so."

"Why, the Bible doesn't say any thing about it, does it?"

"Just look and see," replied Martha: "look at one of the first chapters of Genesis."

"Oh! I know now," exclaimed James. "It says, The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

"Well," said Martha, "don't you think Adam and Eve found enough to do to keep such a great garden in order? Only think how much there is to be done in our little one."

"Oh! yes;" said James. "I never thought of that before. I should think it would have been enough to keep the weeds out of such a great garden as Eden was."

"Are you sure there were any weeds in it," asked Martha.

"Why, I suppose there are weeds in every garden," replied James.

"Well, I don't know but there might have been weeds in Eden; but I was just thinking, there were probably no very troublesome ones such as we have now; thorns and thistles, and some *running* weeds for example."

"Why, what makes you suppose that?" asked Ellen.

"Something that there is in the Bible," answered Martha. "Let me see if either of you can think."

"I can't think of any thing," said Ellen.

"Nor I," said James.

"Well, see if you can find out by reading. I will look too, if you will hand me that Bible that lies by you."

"It doesn't say any thing about it," said Ellen, after they had looked a few minutes. "It only says there was every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food."

"Adam didn't have any thing to do with watering his garden it seems," remarked James; "for it says that a river went out of it to water it. I don't see how that was."

"Why," said Ellen, "perhaps it means that the river was where Adam obtained his water for his garden; don't you suppose it does, Martha?"

"I never thought any thing about it before," replied Martha; "but I should rather think it was meant that the river itself watered the ground; I don't know exactly how, though. But you know in some countries the ground is watered altogether by rivers, as there is no rain as we have."

"The river Nile waters Egypt you know, Martha," said Ellen, "by overflowing its banks. But I should think that would be a trouble. It must make the ground very wet."

"Well, I never thought much about it," said Martha. "But I suppose we can find out about it. We will look in the large geography to-morrow, or we can ask about it some time, at school."

"Did you say, Ellen, that there were some countries where it never rains?" asked James, "Why, how do they get rain water?"

"They don't need *rain* water," replied Ellen, "if they can have a plenty of other water. People in the country, you know, in most places, have soft water from their wells. *Ours* happens to be hard; but, you know, Mr. Grafton's is soft."

"What makes the difference?" asked James.

"Perhaps we ought not to talk about that Sunday night. I will tell you what I know about it some other time. You know we are finding out now what Adam had to do in his garden."

"About his having any very troublesome weeds to

clear away," said Ellen. "Why, can't you tell us what makes you think there were no thorns or thistles. I am sure it doesn't say any thing about it in the description of the garden."

"Well, now look farther along till you find where Adam and Eve were turned out of the garden after their sin."

"Oh! now I understand it," said James, who had been looking in the next chapter. "It says, 'I will curse the ground for thy sake, and thorns and thistles also shall it bring forth to thee.' So, that shows that there were none before."

"Yes," said Martha, "that was what I meant. And I believe it is a general opinion that there was nothing to annoy or give inconvenience in the garden. We hear sometimes of roses without thorns; so if there were roses in Eden, we are to suppose they were without thorns. There were no poisonous plants springing up; and nothing to blight or kill those that were fair. Every thing was beautiful to look at, or good to eat, or pleasant to the smell."

"How delightful it must have seemed," said James. "But what would Adam have to do if there was no watering or weeding to do?"

"Oh! there are a great many things to do in a garden besides watering and weeding. There are trees to be pruned—dead leaves to be taken off—slender twigs to be propped up, and a great many things."

"Why," said James, "I always thought as Ellen did, that they had nothing to do but to walk about and look at the things, and smell the flowers."

"But," replied Martha, "that would be a very miserable life to lead. Adam and Eve we suppose to have been perfectly happy before they eat the for-

bidden fruit; but that couldn't have been if they had nothing to do."

"Why," said James, "I should think they would have had a beautiful time; I am sure I should like to be in such a garden without any thing to do. I shouldn't want any thing to do but to look at so many trees and flowers."

"Oh! yes you would," said Martha. "If we were to put you into the most delightful garden that could be thought of, you would soon be tired of staying, if you hadn't your whittling knife with you, or your books or something."

"I thought when we went to see the Botanical gardens," replied James, "that I should like to stay there all day; I couldn't bear to come away."

"Well," said Martha, "you would have liked to stay until you had seen all there was to be seen; but, after that, you would be tired of the same things. Let us shut you up for a week there and let you have nothing to do but enjoy the garden, and I suspect you would be glad enough to come out. We like to go out into our little garden once in a while and look at our flowers and bushes,—but we shouldn't like to stand a whole day looking at them."

"And there is another thing, Martha," said Ellen: "you know we always like best to be doing something to the plants when we go out. You are always trying to find a dead leaf upon your geranium that you value so much, and to count the new ones that have come out, and to dig up the ground about the root."

"Well; and come to think of it," said James, "I had rather be fixing *my* bed than to look at any of your flowers or stumps. Father told me I might have that place down by the rose-bushes for mine;

don't you tread on it either of you, before I get it fixed. I am going to put a border round it."

"Hadn't you better let father fix it for you, James," asked Ellen; "he can do it a good deal better than you can."

"No," said James, "I can fix it well enough, and I had rather do it myself."

"Oh!" that is just what I asked you for," said Ellen, laughing, "to see if you wouldn't say you wanted to do it yourself. That just shows that what Martha says is true, that we should find it pleasantest to have something to *do* if we were in a garden."

"Yes," said Martha, "and there is my poor geranium that you laugh so much about, I value that more than any other we have got, I have taken so much pains with it, and it was such a miserable looking thing when I first put it into the pot. I think more of a new leaf that comes out upon that than of a whole branch that comes out upon any of the others."

"So I suppose," said Ellen, "that in the garden of Eden there were plants that needed care, just as ours do. They had enough to do then."

"Yes," said Martha, "we may be quite sure they had employment, for nobody was ever happy yet, with nothing to do."

"I always thought," said James, "that if I was a man I should like to be very rich so as not to be obliged to do any work."

"You might like to be excused from doing some things," replied Martha; "but I don't think you would find it pleasant to be entirely idle very often, any more than you do now. You might have been idle this evening if you had wished it very much, in-

stead of troubling yourself about what Adam and Eve had to do."

"Well," said Ellen, "Adam was a gardener, then. But he was turned out of the garden before Cain and Abel were born; what do you suppose *they* found to do ?"

"The Bible tells us that, too," replied Martha. "You know, don't you ? You have read it a hundred times."

"I don't know," said James, as he looked in the Bible again.

"Oh ! yes I did know too," said Ellen, when she had looked over a few verses. "Abel tended flocks and Cain tilled the ground. But I shouldn't have thought of it. How strange that we should forget things that we have read a hundred times !"

"I don't believe you will forget after this, what was the business of Cain and Abel. It is because we read the Bible so carelessly that we forget so much of it. You have read the story of Cain and Abel so many times, that it doesn't interest you as a new story would, and so you pass over a great many important things, without noticing them."

"Do you remember, Martha, all about every thing that you have read in the Bible ?" asked Ellen.

"Oh ! no indeed," replied Martha; "I very often come across a story as interesting as the story of Moses or Daniel, that I have forgotten almost entirely, and that seems almost as new as if I had never read it before. It is because I think of a great many things that I never minded when I used to read them over and over again. I was reading an account of a battle the other day, between two kings, that I did'nt remember a single word about. King David heard that one of the neighboring kings had

lost his father. The king who died—I can't think now what his name was—he was not a very particular friend of David's; but David remembered that, upon a certain occasion he had received some kindness from him. So he thought he would send some messengers to his son with his compliments, to say that he sympathised with him in his affliction. The messengers went; and were treated shamefully; and there was war about the matter. The account of the battle is very interesting, and the whole story seemed as new and interesting as if I never had seen it before; but I suppose I had, a great many times."

"Well, tell us the whole of it now, Martha," said James. "I never read it."

"I don't remember a word about it," said Ellen.

"Well, we will find it some time," said Martha, "and read it. There are a hundred others that we can read over together; so we shall always have work enough for Sunday evening. If we had ever read the first chapters of Genesis with as much interest as we have looked into them to night, we should have always thought of Adam as a gardener, of Cain as a farmer, and of Abel as a shepherd. We shall all remember it now."

"I should think Cain might have had enough to do to raise things for the table," said Ellen; "but how would they need a great many sheep?"

"What are the uses they would make of sheep," said Martha. "Let us enumerate the things they are good for."

"They would want them to eat," said James.

"And the wool for clothes," added Ellen—"and there is nothing else that they are good for."

"I can think of something else;" said Martha, "can't you James?"

"Why no; *ours* are good for nothing but to eat, besides the wool?"

"Well, now recollect the picture in the place where you have just been reading."

"Oh! yes," said Ellen, "sacrifices."

"What did they use to offer sacrifices for?" asked James.

"I can't tell you a great deal about it," said Martha; "and if I could, I don't think you would understand it very well."

"Well, after all," said Ellen, "if they had ever so many sheep, I shouldn't suppose it would be necessary to attend to them all the time. Ours don't need tending constantly. Why do they have shepherds any where?"

"That is another thing I can't tell you much about," replied Martha. I believe you and James will teach me to *think*, by the questions you ask. But really, as much as is said in the Bible of shepherds and their flocks, I never considered how the time of a shepherd was spent."

"Well," said Ellen, "you know there are shepherds now days. You remember the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, and the Shepherd of the Mountains."

"There is a picture in my reading," said James, "of a shepherd with a crook."

"Yes, we have seen pictures of them;" said Martha, "but I suspect neither of us ever saw a real shepherd, that is, a person whose whole business it was to tend sheep; and I don't know that there are any such shepherds in this part of the United States if there are in any parts. I don't know that any very large flocks are raised by any persons in these parts. But in very ancient times, a man's riches would very often consist

altogether of flocks and herds. When you read in the Bible of any very rich man, you will find that it will be told how many sheep and oxen he owned. I presume, that, at the present time, in some parts of the country, individuals get their living altogether by raising sheep, or by tending them, for other people. Such a person would of course be a shepherd."

"Oh! how I should like to see a real shepherd with a crook;" said James, "What do you suppose they have those crooks, for, Martha?"

"I don't know," said Martha; "perhaps they are of some use in guiding the flock."

"Perhaps," said Ellen, "the shepherd uses his crook as the constables do their poles—to keep the sheep from going where they ought not to."

"Ah!" exclaimed Ellen, as if she had thought of something new, "do you remember the hymn, that begins, "while shepherds watched their flocks by night." It seems that their flocks needed watching in the night. I wish we could find out something more about the shepherds of those days."

"Well," said Martha, "I think it very probable that we may find all we want in The Natural History of the Bible. We shall certainly find *sheep*, and that probably will speak of the manner of treating them. —I will try to borrow that book some time before next Sabbath."

"I am afraid we shall forget some of the things we are to find out," said Ellen; "we have got so many."

"Well, we will write them down together," said Martha, "and collect our information as we may happen to have opportunity. You mention what they are, and I will make the list."

"You are going to tell me what makes some water soft and some hard," said James.

"Well, *Hard and soft water*, I write," said Eliza, taking pencil and paper.

"About rivers overflowing their banks," added Ellen. "And, about Shepherds, by all means," said Martha, she wrote the word *shepherds*.

"Yes," said Ellen, "I *do* want to know what the people found to do with so many sheep. I just thought of Joseph's brethren, being all shepherds every one. When Pharoah asked them what their occupation was, they replied that they were shepherds and their father's before them. There was a whole family of eleven sons, all shepherds."

"David was a shepherd, before he was a king," remarked James.

"So we have found out that the people in Bible times did have *something* to do besides walking about, and talking and having war," said Ellen.

"Oh! I was going to ask you to look along a little further in the chapter about Cain and Abel," said Martha, "and see if you couldn't find mention of some other trade besides a shepherd's and farmer's. We will examine that, and then stop for to-night."

"Why," exclaimed Ellen, as all three looked over the chapter, "artificers in brass and iron!—and"

"And they made harps and organs," continued James.

"Why," said Ellen, "I shouldn't have thought of their having those things so early."

"How early," asked Martha.

"Why, when there were so few people," replied Ellen.

"But it wasn't in the time of Cain and Abel, you

must observe, that they worked in brass and had harps and organs. It was in the fifth or sixth generation after Cain. There was Cain's son Enoch, and Enoch's son Irad, and Irad's son, Mehujael, and so on; so it might have been hundreds of years before they had brass founders, and organ builders, &c. We could tell, if we had Scott's Bible, by the notes in the margin; or we could tell by counting the years that each of these indivlduals lived. These are given a little farther over in the Bible. But we won't look to night. I will put it on the list and then we will find out some other time when musical instruments were first made. Let's not go any farther to night.

So saying, Martha rose and left the room. Ellen left her seat at the table for a rocking chair, while James assumed a very comfortable half recumbent posture, and continued employed at the table, turning over the large Bible to look at the pictures.

In a few minutes Martha returned to the parlor bringing a basket of fine white grapes.

"Ah! Martha!" exclaimed Ellen and James at once; "where *did* you get those beautiful grapes?"

"Don't they look too pretty to eat?" asked Martha, as she held them before the light.

"I think we could make out to eat a bunch or two notwithstanding," said Ellen.

"Well, help yourselves," said Martha, setting down the basket. "But let me first take out two of the handsomest bunches for father and mother."

"As sweet as honey," said James as he tasted his: "I don't believe Adam had any better ones in his garden; though I think it must have been pleasanter to have taken them himself from the vines, they do look so pretty growing. How I should love

to live in Italy where they have grapes and oranges and such things so plenty."

"Shouldn't you prefer to live where you do, and only have your climate changed?" asked Martha; "for, in Italy, and most other places where fruits are so plenty, there are fewer privileges of the kind *we* enjoy."

"Oh! yes;" said James, "I guess I should like to live best in the United States, after all; but then, I should like a great many things that they have in some other countries."

"And the people of some other countries would like many things that we have too," said Martha. "I heard Mr. Ashford say he would have given a barrel of oranges for a barrel of our potatoes at any time, while he was in Alabama. But after all, what an advantage it is to every country that there are other climates different from its own."

"Oranges, and lemons, and figs, and raisins, are most abundant in the torrid zone, though some are produced in other places," said James, repeating the words from the Geography.

"Is it possible?" said Ellen laughing, "where *did* you learn all that?"

"Come," said Martha, "you ought not to laugh at him, Ellen."

"I don't see what there was to laugh at," said James, looking a little mortified, and not quite good-humored.

"No, there wasn't James," said Ellen, in a conciliatory tone as she playfully patted his head, for, at the moment she recollected a hint her sister had given her in regard to her propensity to indulging a turn for satire. James could not endure being laughed at, and Ellen knew it, but she could hardly re-

strain her disposition to tease him a little, once in a while.

"Well, Martha," she continued after she had partly restored James to good-humor;—"what about the advantages of having different climates in different parts of the world?"

"I was only going to speak of the advantage of having such a difference in the productions of the earth in different places. If all climates were just like ours in New England, we should have, of course, only the same plants and fruits that grow here. We shouldn't have any spices for example, for they must all come from the torrid zone; we should have no coffee or tea; but very few oranges or lemons, no rice—no cotton to make cloth of. We have the benefit of the productions of all sorts of climates, while we live in the one that seems to us more delightful than any of the rest."

Here their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of their father and mother who had returned from lecture. Their parents were glad to learn that the evening had been profitably spent, and recommended that their Bible lesson should be continued the next Sabbath.

The next Saturday afternoon, James was not to go to school, and he thought he should enjoy spending the whole afternoon in play. He went out first to swing for half an hour; next, he took his hoop, and trundled it up and down the gravel walks around the house; but he had pretty soon had exercise enough, and he thought he should like to have something that he could sit still and do; so he concluded to make him a ball. His mother gave him the top of an old stocking, to unravel for yarn, and he sat down upon the door-step and worked very

busily until he had wound a good sized ball; but, as he had no time, he could not quilt it, so as to have it ready to play with. He went into the parlor to see how his sisters were employed. Martha and Ellen were busy with their sewing, and James seated himself upon one end of the sofa where they were sitting He felt as if he had had play enough for one, and yet, he said, he did not feel exactly like reading or studying, and he had rather hear his sisters talk. Their conversation before James came in, had been, for the most part, respecting the wrong conduct of one of their companions at school; but upon James expressing a desire to have the benefit of their conversation, they concluded very correctly, that some more profitable topic might be selected. Martha proposed that they should talk a little while upon the subjects that had come up in their Bible exercise, the last Sabbath evening, to which proposal, Ellen and James very readily agreed.

"Well," said Ellen, "in the first place you are to tell us about the garden of Eden being watered by rivers. We were not certain whether it was meant that the water was obtained from the river and poured upon the ground, or whether the river itself sometimes overflowed."

"Yes, I remember," said Martha; "you thought it would make rather bad walking if the river ran over. So I thought I would find out about the river Nile that waters Egypt; I found Egypt in the first place, in Morse's large Geography, and looked under the head Rivers, Soil and Agriculture. It was stated that the river Nile began to rise about the middle of June and to go down in October; that is, let's see—June, July, August, September—it is as much as four or five months that it is up."

"What should make it come up," asked Ellen.

"The water flows down from the countries round where there is plenty of rain," replied Martha.

"Flows *down!*" said James, "why, Egypt is at the very top of Africa." Ellen burst into a laugh, at the remark. "I suppose James thinks as I used to," said she, "that towards the top of the map was *up*, of course."

"Well, isn't it," said James,—"but you needn't laugh, miss Ellen; perhaps you will make a mistake yourself sometime."

"Oh! don't speak so, James," said Martha; "you musn't care for being laughed at when there is nobody here. *I* shall make mistakes myself probably a great many times, in telling you things; and then you may both laugh at me, as much as you please. But just get your Atlas, James, and we will see how the water runs."

James did not know where his atlas was, or where to look for it, for he had a sad habit of leaving things just where it was convenient to drop them. His hat was as likely to be tossed upon the entry floor as to be hung up in its proper place. His books were scattered all over the house, and his tools and his play-things were left wherever he happened to be using them. There was scarcely ever a day when his sisters were not obliged to be at the trouble of helping him search the house for something that he had lost and could not do without. James didn't know, in the present case, whether his atlas had been brought home or left at school, or, whether it was up stairs or down stairs, or in the house or in the garden.

Martha left her work to assist in the search for the atlas. They looked around the room and in the

entry and in the closet and in the Secretary, but no atlas was found. Ellen was a little impatient at the delay and bustle that was occasioned, and was complaining of James' heedlessness, and of having her work pulled about, when, at last, as James peeped behind the Secretary he espied the atlas, which showed, as he said that for once, he *had* put it in its right place, only it had slipped down.

Ellen made some remark that was not quite good-humored, about his being not much used to putting it into its right place, as appeared from his having forgotten that he had put it there. James was irritated by the remark and was prepared with some cross answer; but Martha, who was always the peace-maker of the two, contrived to restore good-humor, and proceeded with the lesson. She showed James that the river Nile flowed from the south towards the north, proving that the country must slope towards the north; so that what we would call the *top* of Egypt as we looked upon the map, was really *down*, and the bottom was up. She told him that he must always observe which way the rivers flow in any country, if he wished to know which way was *down* or *up*.

"Well, here is Abysinia," continued Martha, "where, according to the account, there are plenty of rains, and the water from the mountains runs along until it meets the Nile. All the rainy season then, that is, from June to October, the river is rising, when it gets as high as the surface of the ground, of course, it runs over."

"And then what do the people do," asked Ellen. "It must be very wet."

"The Geography doesn't give any such particulars," said Martha, "but I looked in the Bible Dic-

tionary, and there it is stated that twenty miles on each side of the river, is covered with water, so that nothing is seen but houses and trees."

"Why," said James, "how *do* the people go about in so much water?"

"The water can't stand very deep," said Ellen; "so, perhaps they are no worse off than we are, when there comes a good February thaw. They could get along with India rubbers."

"Perhaps they don't happen to have India-rubbers off there," said James.

"Off there," replied Ellen, "why Egypt is nearer India than we are."

"You are talking about India rubber," said Martha, "I should think it more likely that they would paddle about in boats. The water *must* stand deep, for you know there was nothing to be seen but trees and houses."

"Oh! I forgot that," said Ellen; "how *do* they get along; I shouln't suppose it would do the crops any good to be laid under water, for any length of time."

"We have rivers in the United States that rise above their banks," said Martha, "the Mississippi you know, is banked out, at New Orleans."

"Banked out?" said James.

"Yes," replied Martha, "they make what are called *levees*, or banks raised with staves filled in with earth. They are nearly as high as a man's head in most places; and in some places, where the river bends and there is a greater rush of the waters, twice or three times as high. I didn't think of the Mississippi before. I remember now, of hearing of the water breaking through some years ago, so the city of New Orleans was laid under six feet of

water. The levees required to be constantly watched day and night, when it is high water, lest they should get out of repair."

"Well," said James, "I should think they might have levees upon the Nile."

"But," replied Martha, "you forget that they must have the water; they have no rain you know, as we do."

"Why, is that all the water they have," asked James; "don't they have wells?"

"The account says they dig some wells for the purposes of watering the ground; but that the water is not fit to drink; but that of the Nile is said to be very excellent—the best in the world. So during the wet season they preserve it in cisterns. It is rather muddy when it is caught, but they have a way of purifying it. In the parts of the year when the inundations are over, they must draw all their water, from these cisterns, to water the fields with. For in those countries, the sowing is done in October, instead of April or May."

"How much trouble they *do* have just to get water," said James.

"Just to get water," repeated Martha; "why, water is one of the greatest blessings we enjoy; only it is so common, that we don't think any thing about it. Just imagine what trouble we should be in, at almost any season of the year, without rain for two or three months."

"I am glad we don't live in Egypt," said James, "when there is so much trouble to get water."

"We have our advantages," replied Martha, "and the Egyptians have theirs. We have plenty of rain to supply our springs, so that we get water just by digging for it; and they have the fine fruits that you

think you should like to have so plenty around you. You were saying the other day that you should be delighted to live in Italy, where you could have oranges, and figs, and grapes, in such abundance."

"Well," said Ellen, "you spoke of the Nile's inundating the country for twenty miles on each side of the river; but that is but a little way after all; how do you suppose they get water in other places?"

"Oh! I havn't told you all yet," replied Martha. "As the inundations last only for a short time, the inhabitants even within that twenty miles are at great pains to keep their water for the rest of the year. They preserve it in large cisterns or reservoirs. The water is carried to other parts of the country by means of canals or ditches. Such a plan for watering a country is called *irrigation;* you have heard that term frequently. All the water comes from the river; so in the plagues of Egypt, when the Nile was turned to blood, and the water that had been preserved in pools and cisterns; there was none to be had any where."

"Oh! I never thought of that," said Ellen.

"Nor *I*," said Martha; "but when I am talking with you about such subjects I think of a great many things that I never considered before. But we will suspend our conversation for the present and take a run in the garden until it is time for tea."

"Well, James, how are you going to be employed this evening," enquired Martha, as she and Ellen took their seats at the table with their work after tea. Their father was absent on business, and their mother was engaged with the younger children, up stairs; so that the young folks had the parlor to themselves.

"Why, I don't know," replied James, to his sis-

ter's question. "I wanted to do something to my ball; but I haven't any twine; Tom Harlow promised to get me some a week ago; but I don't see that I am ever going to have it."

"Not if you depend upon Tom Harlow," said Ellen, "for he never thinks of any thing, full as he is of his promises."

"That reminds me of Miss Somer's promise to lend us Bruce's Travels," said Martha, "I told her I would call for them; but she insisted upon sending them. They don't seem to have come yet, however."

"Well there," said Ellen "Mary Somers is just such another person about her promises. I like Mary very much, and she is very obliging; but I never any more expect when she says she will do any thing for me, or lend me any thing, that it will be done unless I remind her of it again, than if she had never promised. I always say to myself, when she promises to bring me a book to school, 'no you won't, I know.'"

"Take care now," said Martha, "I am afraid you are meaning your hint for *me*."

"No," replied Ellen, "I didn't intend to give any *hints*, but then I must confess, that it is rather your fault, Martha, to neglect or to put off what you promise to do."

James seemed a little inclined to exult over his sister, for standing convicted of a fault which he insisted was as bad as leaving books and other things, out of their places.

Martha acknowledged that it was, but as she desired to break herself of it, she requested that both Ellen and James would mention it to her whenever they knew her to forget any thing she had promised.

"But James," said Martha, as she resumed her work, which she had only held in her hands during the conversation,—"haven't you a lesson in Colburn to get to-night?"

"I have got one to learn," replied James, in rather a reluctant tone; "but I don't feel much like learning it to-night. I can get it in the morning."

"But you know how you love to sleep when morning comes," replied Martha.

"Yes," said James, "but I am going to try your plan of jumping up the instant I wake, if it is time to rise, and then there will be no danger."

"Well," said Ellen, "let's try him for once; and as you and I must attend to our work, why cannot we talk about some of our Bible subjects? I feel a great deal more interest in the characters of the Old Testament times, since I have come to consider them as occupied in the same way as the people of the present time. I used, as I said before, to think of Adam and Eve as having nothing particular to do but to walk about and converse with each other; and the people I always imagined as venerable personages, going about in long, flowing garments, and with very sober faces, —talking only upon very deep subjects, and receiving now and then, a formal visit from a prophet or some solemn personage of whom they were, perhaps, half afraid."

"Well done!" said Martha; "a quiet sort of world you would have had of it, with nothing going on in it. You talk of *venerable* personages.—I suppose there were no young people, or children then."

"Oh! yes," replied Ellen, "of course, I knew better; but then, things *seemed* so. The people must all have been young to be sure, before they were old; but, you know there is very little said of children in the Bible."

"No; because what it is most important for us to know, related to older persons; and the Bible was not written simply to interest or amuse us. You mention the formal visits they received now and then from some solemn personage:—I should like to tell you about a visit paid by one patriarch to another, that I was reading of the other day, and see if you can tell who they were, without my mentioning any names. There is nothing very remarkable in it, only it seemed to me as I read it, that it might have been very pleasant, and not such an *awful* interview as you conceive of."

"Well, let us have it," said Ellen.

"A certain individual," said Martha, "started upon a very long journey. His wife and children did not set out with him, but he made arrangements for having them conducted by a different route to a place at which he expected to spend a considerable time, where he would meet them. So the wife and sons remained where they were, at her father's, until he was ready to accompany them on their way. The distance was quite a long one, and it seems to have been a considerable time before they met, at any rate, so long that the gentleman was quite rejoiced to see his family again. As they approached his house he recognised his father-in-law, and went out to meet him. There were cordial greetings on all sides; and many enquiries, as they entered the dwelling, after their mutual welfare, past and present. The husband gave a full account of all that had happened on his journey; and the wife and her father recounted in their turn, their adventures and proceedings at home, and after they had set out. The father expressed his happiness and gratitude, for the mercies which had attended his son-in-law

as well as his own company, upon their expedition; and there were mutual congratulations upon the subject of their pleasant meeting."

"Oh! I begin to suspect who are meant," said Ellen, as Martha paused for a moment. "The father-in-law, I have guessed out."

"Well, *I* don't know," said James, eagerly: "so don't tell, Ellen, till she gets through."

"The father-in-law, happened to be a priest," continued Martha,— "one of Ellen's *solemn personages:* so, upon the occasion of his visit, the priests in that place, with all the other distinguished individuals, about seventy in number, came to meet him; and, at the suggestion of the stranger, offered sacrifices together, in commemoration of many circumstances of mercy in which he considered them to be placed. After this, they eat together, and the visiters dispersed.

"The next day, as the host went forth to his business, his guest observed him engaged for several hours without cessation, with a crowd of persons who were continually collecting about him. 'Why do you sit here all day long with so many people around you?' enquired the father-in-law. The son replied that he had been appointed a sort of judge or lawyer for the Israelites, so that all the difficulties or disputes between any individuals were brought to him to decide.

"'Well, but you will soon wear yourself out if you apply yourself so closely to the business,' said the father-in-law, 'Why do you not divide the labor? Why not look out some discreet individuals qualified to attend to such business, and refer to each a certain division of the people, to whose affairs they shall severally attend, as far as they are able. The

more difficult matters, they could bring to you. Thus you would be relieved of a great part of your burden, and not only so, but you would feel that you had companions in your labors.'

"The son thought very favorably of the proposal, and immediately made arrangements for carrying it into effect. He made selection of individual possessing the specified qualifications,—'men of truth, without covetousness, and that feared God,' and assigned to each their division of the labor. The cases that were too difficult for them they referred to Moses and——"

"There !—to *Moses*——you have told us now," said Ellen.

"How do you know that Moses is the one I have been speaking about," said Martha, "I only said they referred to Moses; how do you know but the man I have been speaking of, appointed Moses to the business."

"No, I know you meant Moses," persisted Ellen, "for I remember something about the story now, though I could not have related it, if you had asked me."

"Where is the chapter," enquired James, "I want to read it."

"It is somewhere in Exodus," said Martha; "you can find it some time. There are hundreds of interesting accounts like these, in the Bible," continued Martha, "and I propose that some time, we each study a story, to tell to the others, just as I have told the one about Moses, without naming the characters, and see if we can guess them. We shall have to read them very carefully, if we are going to relate them, and, in this way, we shall become fa-

miliar with the Bible histories, much faster than by only reading them over in the ordinary way."

Ellen and James liked the plan, and each agreed to study a story for the purpose, before the next evening.

SACRED IMAGERY.

ANOTHER BIBLE LESSON.

THERE is a great variety of ways to study the Bible besides reading it in course, or committing passages to memory. The older children of a family could invent a great many plans for interesting their younger brothers and sisters in their Bible studies. One exercise which would be found interesting and profitable, and which would answer for a great many lessons, might be the study of the figurative language of the Bible. By figurative language is meant that which is different from the language that we should most commonly use in expressing the same idea. For instance, we might speak of the *thirsty ground*, or the *rosy morning*. To express the same ideas in plain, common, language, we should say, "the ground needs watering" —and the sky in the morning is red. All the figures of speech have been arranged and classified. The following is an explanation of some of the most common ones.

Metaphor. A metaphor is a mode of speech by which we call one thing by the name of another, to

which it, in some sense, bears a resemblance. For instance, truth is sometimes called a *jewel*, because a character for truth, is to be highly valued.

Allegory. Sometimes a whole story is told in the style of metaphor. Instead of the person or thing that is really intended, something that has a resemblance to the person or thing is introduced. For instance, there might be a story of two young and defenceless children, who had strayed away from home and lost their way; there would be something in the situation of the two children like that of two lambs who had wandered away from the fold; so that, in the story, they would be called lambs, and the person who found them and carried them back to their homes, might be called a shepherd. If all through the story, the children were represented as lambs instead of children, the story would be called an Allegory. There are many very beautiful allegories in the Bible.

Comparison. Two things are sometimes compared together, which are very different in their natures, and yet which, in some sense are alike. For instance, we may say "the wicked are like the troubled ocean." In one sense, there is a great difference between an ocean and a man. One is a living being, and the other is a body of water. And yet, there is something in the ocean, when it is agitated, that reminds us of the agitated and troubled feeling that wicked persons so often suffer; and hence, we may compare the two things together.

Personification. When we represent an inanimate object, as seeing or hearing, or speaking, or acting, in any way, like living persons, we are said to personify that object; that is to treat it as if it were a person. As, for example to say—"The sea

saw it and fled,"—would be to represent the sea as having eyes and understanding like a person.

Apostrophe. An apostrophe is an address to some absent person or thing as if present and listening to us. It is very common to use the form of address to a person who is dead, as if he could hear us; as when King David addressed his son who had been slain—"Oh Absalom, my son, my son!"

Interrogation. By interrogation we commonly mean asking a question for the sake of information. But sometimes a person will put a sentiment into the form of a question, only for the sake of enforcing the truth of it. It is as much as to ask if it is a thing that any body can deny.

Irony. We sometimes say things exactly contrary to the truth, and yet without any intention to deceive; as when for instance, a person should say upon a very warm day in summer, "Why what freezing weather we have." There are very few instances of ironical expression in the Bible.

When the meaning of these figures is clearly understood, exercises may be assigned under each. An older sister might assign it as a lesson to several of the younger ones to look out a certain number of examples of any one of these figures, in the Bible. She must make her explanations perfectly clear, in the first place, giving a number of simple examples under each figure, until she is sure they are understood. She can explain one at a time, and let the examples be selected before she proceeds to the next. Let her explain the meaning of figurative language in general, to begin with. This she can make familiar by giving a number of examples of both plain and figurative language, asking the children to tell which they are. For instance she might say "*The*

sun shines, is that language plain, common language, or is it figurative ?"—"Plain," they would answer. Then she could express the same idea in another way,—"The sun lights up the heavens."—"Figurative," they would say. She might go on, proposing a number of similar examples, until the subject was perfectly familiar, and then proceed to give them the lessons to be studied by themselves.

Each of the children could look out the examples separately, putting marks into the Bible at the places, or writing the references to the chapter and verse upon a piece of paper. When all were prepared, they could meet together as a little class, and read their examples aloud in turn. Each will have some examples different from any selected by the others, if the lesson is studied by each one separately, so that, in all, the number of examples will be greater than if all studied together.

A few examples under each figure, are here inserted as specimens. If the children would select as many more as they could find, and write them down, they could make quite a little book full of them, out of the whole.

METAPHOR.

Gen. xv. 1.—I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Ps. iii. 3.—Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

Ps. xviii. 35.—Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.

Ps. xci. 4.—His truth shall be thy shield.

Prov. xxx. 5.—He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Ps. cxv. 9, 10, 11.—O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.

O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.

Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.

Eph. vi. 16, 17.—Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Ps. xviii. 31.—Who is a rock save our God?

Deut. xxxii. 4.—He is the rock, his word is perfect: a God of truth.

Ps. lxii. 2.—He only is my rock.

Ps. lxxxix. 26.—He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.

Ps. xciv. 22.—But the Lord is my defence: and my God is the rock of my refuge.

Ps. xcii 15.—To show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Ps. lxi. 2.—When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

1 Cor. x. 4.—For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Deut. xxxiii. 27.—The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Ps. ix. 9.—The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Ps. lxii. 8.—God is a refuge for us.

Ps. xci. 2.—I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Jer. xvi. 19.—O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction.

Rom. xi. 26.—There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Ps. xviii. 2.—The Lord is my buckler.

2 Sam. xxii. 31.—He is a buckler to all them that trust in him.

Prov. xviii. 10. The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Ps. lxi. 3.—Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

2 Sam. xxii. 51.—He is the tower of salvation for his king: and showeth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

Ps. xliii. 2.—Thou art the God of my strength.

Ps. xciii. 1.—The Lord is clothed with strength.

Ps. lxxiii. 26.—My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Ps. lix. 17.—Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence.

Ps. cxliv. 1.—Blessed be the Lord, my strength.

ALLEGORY.

Ps. lxxx. 8—16.—Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.

She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way, do pluck her?

The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.

It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

Isa. v. 1—7.—Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it ? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ?

And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up: and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

2 Sam. xii. 1—7.—And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing, shall surely die:

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul.

JUDGES ix. 8—15.—The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us.

But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

And the trees said unto the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us.

But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us.

And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us.

And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

COMPARISON.

ISA. xxxii. 2.—And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

DEUT. xxxii. 11, 12.—As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

JER. xxiii. 29.—Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

PS. cxxiii. 2.—Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a

maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Isa. lv. 8—11.—For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it.

Prov. iv. 18.—The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Ps. ciii. 11, 12, 13.—For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

PERSONIFICATION.

Ps. cxiv.—When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.

What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?

Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of thy God:

APOSTROPHE.

Deut. xxxiii. 29.—Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon the high places.

Matt. xxiii. 37.—O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !

Hosea xiii. 9.—O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

Hosea xiii. 14.—I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.

INTERROGATION.

Deut. xxxii. 6.—Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise ? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee ? hath he not made thee, and established thee ?

Haggai i. 4.—Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste ?

Jer. v. 22.—Fear ye not me ? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it ?

Amos v. 25.—Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wildernes forty years, O house of Israel ?

Ps. xciv. 9, 10.—He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ?

He that formed the eye, shall he not see ?

He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct ?

He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know ?

Jer. xiii. 23.—Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

IRONY.

1 KINGS xviii. 27.—And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

DEUT. xxxii. 36, 37, 38.—For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.

And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.

ECCLES. xi. 9, 10.—Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Therefore, remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

DON'T FORGET YOUR BIRTH-DAY.

THERE are some moments in the life of every individual, however gay, however thoughtless, when the tide of worldliness and worldly cares will be stopped in its rapid course, and thoughts of another and a better world, will find their way into his bosom. He will then remember and feel, that he has within him a treasure, whose price is far above rubies. His attention will be turned to his immortal nature, and to that long eternity, in which he may, if he will now but make the right choice, be ever advancing in knowledge and holiness.

At such times as these, he will wonder how he can be so intent upon the trifles, which now occupy his attention, and with that inferior part of his nature, which must so soon fade and die, and return to its original dust. Who is there, who has not experienced such emotions?

I intend not now to ask whence come these thoughts, and why they often leave so little impression, how they can be so easily banished from the mind. I was led to such reflections by thinking about my friend, Maria.

She was the gayest of the gay. The thought of sorrow or trouble, I should hardly deem had ever entered her mind. She had been well instructed, and her character was such as would gain the love of all who knew her. But she was not a Christian. She had her seasons of thoughtfulness and reflection, but they left no permanent impression. The commencement of a new year was always to her a solemn season, and the effect of her serious meditations on that day, generally lingered long after it was past, though time would always at length, gradually dissipate them, and ere long, she would be as gay as ever.

On that day, she always made it a point to review the events of the past year, and seriously to consider the bent which her character was taking; and never, I presume, did the season pass, without many and sincere resolutions for the future, and tears of sorrow for the faults of the past. But all these good resolves were made in her own unaided strength, and what results could we expect, other than those, which really followed. They would gradually yield to temptation, and before she was aware, she would find herself walking in the same path, in which she

had ever trod, and from which she had fondly imagined, that she could escape alone.

But things could not always go on thus, and well did Maria know this. The day that she completed her fourteenth year, she, as usual, resolved to devote to reflection. She early rose from her pillow, that she might have the silent hours of the morning for her thoughts, when she knew no eye but that of God could be upon her. She took out her journal, which on the last year at that time, she had resolved to keep, and read it over. When it was finished, she asked herself the question, whether her character was in any respect altered for the better, since the day that book was commenced. She could candidly reply, *There is* a change for the better. I have, at least, in a great degree, overcome some of the faults, which a year ago, exerted so uncontrolled an influence over me. My friends have not *as much* cause for complaint, as they had one year since.

But just as she was about to congratulate herself upon this improvement, she remembered her mother's last words to her, as she lay down to sleep the night before. "How it would rejoice my heart, were my daughter only willing to begin her fifthteenth year, with devoting herself to the service of that God, who has brought her so happily to its commencement;"—and she could not but acknowledge to herself, that the means by which she could most please her parents she was not willing to adopt. And again the thought rushed upon her mind, if my parents are thus pained at my unwillingness to come up at once to the work of doing my duty, how must God look upon me?

The train of thought thus introduced, was not to

be stopped here. She reviewed all her past life, and as day after day, she saw the blessings, and the mercies of a holy God falling new and fresh upon her, in contrast, she beheld only an entire forgetfulness of this friend and Benefactor, and a complete consecration of her time, her talents and influence to the world. Could she view herself thus, and not be astonished and humbled at her own ingratitude? She had never felt thus before, and she determined that she would never have cause to feel so again. But when she began to think of forming resolutions for the future, she could not forget, how many she had already made and broken. Still she was not discouraged. She opened her Bible, and she knew where to find strength and wisdom to support her.

I would not dwell on this scene. It is too holy, it is too sacred for the public gaze. It was an hour, we have no doubt, in which the angels in heaven tuned their harps anew, and poured forth a song of joy and thanksgiving, that another soul was saved from death, and would ere long be added to their blissful number.

When the hour for the meeting of the family arrived, it was observed by her mother, that Maria was even more serious and thoughtful than usual on such days, and she could not but put up a silent prayer, and indeed hope, that the time had come, when this beloved one would turn her attention to the concerns she had so long neglected; for she was a child of many prayers. It was noticed by the other children through the whole day, that Maria was very silent, and did not engage with as much ardour as usual, in their many sports;—and how could it be otherwise? Her thoughts were fixed

upon that great step, which she felt that she had taken, and on the weighty and important responsibilities she had assumed by it, and as she looked upon these brothers and sisters, she felt that though a little girl, she had great influence over them, and that thus far, it had been all exerted against God. What the consequences might be, she could not tell, but she had resolved, "forgetting the things which were behind, to press forward to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and she was desirous of knowing in what way, she could best do it. By degrees this deep seriousness of *manner* disappeared; but her whole conduct showed a heart renewed and changed by a power superior to her own.

Does not this little story show the advantage which may result to every one, from setting aside some portion of time for serious meditation? At such a time, if ever, a person might expect to receive the special influences of God's grace. We should surely have more hope of one, who would employ such means, than of an individual, who went on constantly in the round of worldly cares and pleasures, without leaving a moment in which concerns of a higher and more important nature could find an entrance to her heart. Such duties, of course, could never *entitle a person to salvation*, but they *may* be a *means* in the hand of God, as in the case of Maria, to direct the heart to heaven. [*The Wanderer.*]

THE WELSH SHEPHERD.

On the top of a wild and bleak mountain in Wales lives Alfred the Shepherd: on his cheeks the roses of health appear in full bloom, and form a fine contrast to the sun-burnt brown of his face. Coarse are his clothes, hard is his fare, and severe are his labours; yet he is content with his lot: his apparel is warm and clean, his dry crust is sweetened by hunger, and his toils render repose more delightful.

As I was climbing up the hill on which Alfred lives, in my tour through Wales, I heard the tinkling sheep's bells and the barking dog above me, and on reaching the top I saw the Shepherd slowly driving his flock before him. His faithful dog Tray was sharply rebuking the straggling lambs, and then running back to his master, wagging his tail with pleasure, as if sensible that he had done his duty, and deserved a cheering part as his reward.

"Poor peasant," said I, as I was walking towards the Shepherd, "thy life is simple, thine employment is peaceful, thy pleasures are pure. Perhaps thou art more happy than the rich and gay, more virtuous than the great and busy, more pious than many flaming professors of religion." These ideas revolved in my mind till I overtook and accosted him. He seemed disturbed, his solitude was interrupted, his meditations were broken; he bowed his head with rustic simplicity, and said, "Good morning sir." I walked along the hill with him: at first he said but little; however, he gradually became more unreserved and communicative; and I quickly found that though Alfred had mixed but little with the world, yet he had read and reflected more than I could have thought it possible for a person in his situation.

After talking on a variety of subjects, I inquired of the Shepherd, if he really felt himself happy and comfortable in his employment; he replied, "Thank God, sir, I am very happy; for though my situation is humble, yet my wants are but few, and my desires do not exceed my necessities.

'Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.'

"I do not envy the wealthy and the noble; because, if I had been like them, perhaps I should never have thought of my duty to God, and should have loved this world so much as to neglect the world of eternal happiness. If I am not comfortable, it is my own fault; because God has given me many undeserved favors, for which I can never feel sufficiently grateful. I have food and raiment, however homely, and I wish to be therewith content. I have a house to dwell in, and though my friends are poor, yet they are many of them 'rich in faith, and heirs

of the kingdom of heaven.' I have an industrious wife, and God has given us six as fine healthy children as ever lived. In some respects I am much better off than my namesake, Alfred the Great."

I then asked the Shepherd how he had gained that knowledge of books which he seemed to possess. "Why, sir," replied he, "I was always very fond of reading, from a child, and our good minister has lent me a great number of books; and while I am with my sheep I often lie down on the grass, or sit under a tree, and read; indeed I always carry that best of books, the Bible, in my pocket."

"Some of the most excellent men that ever lived," said I, "were shepherds; we have accounts in the Bible of Abel, the three Jewish Patriarchs, Joseph, and David: the retirement required for this occupation seems calculated to promote habits of contemplation and pious reflection."

"We must not forget in this list," added Alfred, "those humble shepherds of Bethlehem, to whom the angel, passing over nobles and kings, imparted the glad tidings of 'peace on earth, and good will towards men.' We find that in the scriptures there are many allusions to pastoral scenes. 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,' says David; 'he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.' It was prophesied of Jesus Christ, 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom;' and he himself said, when upon earth, 'I am the Good Shepherd; and I lay down my life for the sheep.' As I have been wandering through the fields and woods to find out a lost lamb, I have often thought of that passage, 'All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have

turned every one to his own way.' When we depart from the fold of God, Jesus Christ, who was sent to seek and to save those that were lost, will reclaim the wanderers. As I have borne a weak or wounded lamb on my shoulders, I have thought of the tender compassion of Christ to helpless sinners. He restoreth our souls, and leadeth us in the paths of righteousness. He encourages us: 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' so that we are enabled to reply, 'We are the people of thy pasture, and the sheep of thy hand. We were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; and, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away; so we, thy people and sheep of thy pasture, shall give thee thanks for ever; we will show forth thy praises to all generations.'"

Thus talking together, we insensibly arrived near the house of Alfred. The barking of the dog, and the tinkling of the bells, which could be heard at some distance, apprized the children of their father's approach at his usual dinner hour, twelve o'clock. Immediately, on hearing the pleasing signals of their beloved father's return, they all rushed out of the cottage door, and had a well contested race who should welcome him home first. I retired a few steps behind to observe their behaviour. Soon the joyful little creatures surrounded their sire, and began, all of them at once, to tell him of their childish concerns; their prattle was sweetly interesting to a father's ear. I was delighted at the native simplicity and unaffected love which the Shepherd's children displayed. One of the little ones at last spied me, and cried out, "A gentleman!" They

looked round, and all scampered back again to their mother, except the least of them, who was engaged in playing with the dog Tray too busily to be disturbed.

When we arrived at the cottage gate, I wished Alfred good-bye, and intended to continue my journey, but he persuaded me so earnestly to go in and rest myself for a few minutes, that I at last complied with his wishes. The cottage was solitary on the top of the hill; a large elm tree grew by the side, and overshadowed it; it was surrounded with a plantation of potatoes and vegetables, which Alfred cultivated when he had any spare time. As I entered the house, a decent cleanly woman arose at my approach, while the shy country children ran to hide themselves in the corners. Their father, however, soon called them out, and I encouraged them not to be afraid: in a few minutes we were very good friends, and talked together on various subjects. One of the children asked his father if they should say their daily lessons now, as usual. He answered, that he would excuse them to-day as they had a visitor. "No," cried I, "you must not do this; the only difference to-day shall be, that I will take your place, and hear the little folks say their lessons." Saying this, I put my hand into my pocket, and pulled out a bundle of tracts (which I always carry about with me), and, looking out those which had pictures, I promised to reward those children who said their lessons best. The little folks were soon crowding about me, reading, and spelling, and repeating catechisms, hymns, and chapters from the Bible, with very great fluency and ease. I found that they performed so well that I was obliged to give them all a reward, and to the best a double

portion. When all the lessons were said, Kitty, the eldest daughter, spread the cloth, and put on the table a loaf of brown bread, a cheese, a dish of potatoes, and a pitcher of water. After a blessing asked by one of the boys, we attacked our homely fare with greater relish than the pampered sons of luxury find in all their dainties. During dinner time, Alfred entertained us with several entertaining stories of the country; and I told him some of the wonders of the metropolis. All were very much surprised at the facts I mentioned, and one of the children very simply inquired if London was really any larger than their market town: when I answered that it was larger than fifty such places, they were lost in astonishment. The curiosity of the whole family was excited, and they were all asking me questions about the great city, which I answered to their satisfaction.

When the time came for parting, the children were very unwilling to let me go, and would not be satisfied till they had obtained permission from their parents to go down the hill along with me. I rose and took Alfred by the hand; "Friend," said I, "farewell, we shall most probably never meet again on earth; but I hope, when the great Shepherd shall separate his sheep to himself, we shall be placed together on his right hand, and hear him say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" "Amen," said Alfred, lifting up his eyes to heaven—"Amen."

TREATMENT OF PARENTS.

"Charles is the best and kindest of sons, and always was: he is truly a treasure and a blessing." These were the words of the widow Barton, as she folded a letter her son had written, to say that he had prepared a comfortable home for herself and two dependent grand children, to which he wished their immediate removal.—"A treasure and a blessing!" Is there a child who would not rejoice to deserve such a commendation? Perhaps not one. How is it that so enviable a reputation is to be secured? Not always by administering to the temporal necessities of our parents; for there is not always need, and when there is need, not always ability to bestow, and when there is both, something else is always needed.

In dollars and cents, the debt of filial gratitude can never meet its full discharge. Mrs. M.—— is an aged and infirm widow living in Boston, formerly in affluence, but now in circumstances comparatively reduced, and almost without friends. She has a son enjoying the height of prosperity, who it is true, does not allow her to suffer; but then, he is not affectionate or considerate—not what a son ought to be. Recently a considerable remittance was received from this son. "I am thankful for this," said the widow to a friend who happened to be present when the money was received,—"I am thankful for this," she said with tears; "but oh! if Edward would ever come near me, to enquire how I do, or to speak a single kind word to me, it would do me more good than every cent of his fortune."

single kind word ! What mother would not believe her ?

It is to be hoped there are few sons like the last mentioned one; but, it is not to be feared too that there are few like the first one ?—few of the kindest and the best ?

But, not to speak of sons alone, or of either daughters or sons, who have come to an age or condition to be independent of parents, or to stand their partners—their supporters or their solace; let us look after the class who are as yet, themselves the cherished, the supported, the dependent. Let us look among them for the "treasures and the blessings"—for the daughters we will say to begin with, who are every thing that daughters should be,—the affectionate, complying, deferential. We pass by of course, the undutiful, rebelling, ungrateful,—standing out, or distinguished as such. And whom have we left ? Has not the parent of each a blessing and a treasure, in an amiable, and excellent daughter ? Let us ascertain.

First, look into that parlor,—almost any one you please, and let me introduce you to some of the scenes which will be sure to be somewhere acting. Not *extraordinary* ones, but very common—very *trifling* ones, so considered,—which latter, howbeit, is the point we are set to contest. You may happen to see somewhere, a girl somewhat advanced in her teens, with aspect of intelligence and not unamiable. She has been fondly cherished, and well instructed. She has been taught her duty; let us see how well she can perform. It is the hour of school, we will suppose in the morning, and she is preparing to set out. Her kind and careful mother is lending her assistance, to pack the luncheon basket,—to search

for the mislaid book or exercise; and finally, to see that her out-of-door equipment is such as health and comfort demand. But now comes a contest. The mother seems to be urgently pressing some point, and the daughter as urgently resisting. What requirement may it be which is deemed by the daughter so unreasonable? Why, the mother insists that the state of the weather demands a cloak instead of the shawl, and over-shoes instead of slippers. The daughter insists to the contrary. Eloquence is exhausted on either side. The daughter finally conquers, and as she steps abroad, it may be that the mild air and dry walking decide herself to be in the right and her mother's apprehensions groundless.—A trifling matter this to be sure—a trifling question whether should be worn a shawl or a cloak, over-shoes or none. But *was* that the question? was it not rather this!—shall I act the yielding, complying daughter in this case, and save the kindest of mothers from any unnecessary anxiety or disquiet; or shall I cause her trouble or apprehension for my health,—even though I believe my own way to be best?

In taking leave of this imaginary case, we are led, by the way to observe, what an almost universal source of anxiety to parents is the almost universal proneness of young persons to neglect or abuse their health. Where is the mother who does not find it necessary to watch against some imprudent practice, or the habitual inconsiderateness of a child—to caution against careless exposures, or, in the case of injurious consequences, to urge,—perhaps to enforce, the application of remedies. Not long ago, as we were sitting in the room with a young friend, her mother entered, and observing that she was seated

in the air of the window, requested her to remove; saying to her—"you know Julia that it is by sitting with your back to the air, that you are so continually taking cold. I always feel anxious when you are out of my sight." Julia removed, though evidently with reluctance, remarking at the same time "oh! mother, how afraid you always are." In less than fifteen minutes, she was back at the window again. Julia, for once, had her mother's fears very fully to realise. She took a violent cold, and was severely ill. At the commencement of her sickness, some nauseous herb drink, at the direction of her mother, was brought her to take. A little of the tea was tasted, and the rest, as the attendant left the room,—thrown out of the window. This part of the story was disclosed by herself after her recovery, as a piece of very witty ingenuity.

Now Julia was in the main an amiable girl; she certainly loved her mother; her manners too were usually affectionate and never indecorous. To have had the character of an undutiful daughter would have shocked her. How then will you explain these specimens of her doings? We will charge the whole to inconsiderateness, with the hope that some time or other, Julia will have learned to consider.

We will leave Julia and proceed a little farther upon our tour of inspection. Consider again an imaginary case, which may stand for ten thousand real ones.

About six months ago, Mr. A. delightfully surprised his daughter Ellen, by the purchase of an elegant and expensive piano for her use. A teacher was engaged; and the novelty was enchanting. Every spare moment was spent at the piano. But practising has become at length an old story. No-

thing in the world is now so dull and tedious, as to *practise*. The mother urges the importance of persevering attention to the lessons—begs her each day to be prepared for her teacher. But oh ! what a trouble is the whole business ! The task is neglected, or carelessly performed, and there is impatience and complaint, and fretting without end. She has learned a few tunes, and occasionally her father requests to hear one. But she may not happen to *feel like it*, as she says, and then her compliance is reluctant or declined altogether, or some other piece must be taken than the one he chooses, or there is some trouble or other.

Ellen loves her parents. She would not directly disobey their commands;—she would not, for the world, wilfully and deliberately pursue any course for the *purpose* of giving them trouble. How is it then that she will cause them so much ?—It must be that she does not consider. She does not appreciate filial obligation. She thinks herself excusable for neglecting a duty though required by her parents, because it is "*dull* and *tedious*." But when did ever her parents neglect a needed attention to her, because it was *dull* and *tedious*? What will not her parents sacrifice for her ? What can she do that is too much for her parents ? What did any reasonable parent ever require that was too much, for a child to render.

LETTER

FROM

MR. THOMPSON TO HIS SON WILLIAM,

ON DECISION OF CHARACTER.

My Dear William.—I AM very happy to hear, from Mr. M——, that you maintain the same character for diligence and attention, in his counting-house, that you received from your esteemed master at school. Your cousin John also informs me, that your health and spirits are as good as when you left home; for these blessings I trust you feel grateful to him who allows himself to be called "our heavenly Father." Endeared name! my glowing love for my dear children enables me to form some conception of its import. We often talk of you, my dear boy; and your mamma said, at breakfast-time this morning. "There is only one thing that William wants, to make him all that we could wish, and that is—*decision of character.*" I did not forget this remark; and, because I know it to be true, I shall make a few observations on the subject, which I hope you will consider and improve.

Your desire to please, and your fear to offend your companions, are amiable traits in your character; but, when I consider the natural easiness of your temper, I fear lest you should be exposed to temptation, and should comply with the solicitations to evil, which you must expect to encounter in passing through life. Kindness and courtesy may be maintained towards others, without a sacrifice of principle; but we should never forget, that decision of character is absolutely necessary to enable us to

stand firm in the day of trial. I recollect, when I was in an office in London, thirty years ago, that one of my companions was a youth whose character was somewhat similar to one whose name you will be able to guess, when I say that he was very amiable, lively, good tempered, and undecided. This young man's name was Jones, he was the son of pious parents, and seemed at first very steady and well inclined: we often enjoyed a little serious conversation together when office hours were over. Soon after my acquaintance with him, some of our companions proposed going to the theatre, and I heard one of them remark, "'Tis no use asking Thompson; but I think we can persuade Jones to go with us." Three or four of them came up to Jones: at first he declined, he hesitated; they joked with him, laughed at his prejudices, and, by degrees, persuaded him to accompany them. One compliance made way for another; one temptation succeeded another, till poor Jones gave up every thing serious, became gay, dissipated, and was ruined. I tremble lest you, my dear William, should pursue any thing like such a course; beware of the first step—be firm, be decided: let no one who proposes any thing evil to you be led to imagine that you are hesitating, or indifferent on the subject; learn to say, and to say decisively, the important monosyllable—NO. You remember, that when the youthful Joseph was tempted, his answer was firm, decided, and final: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. He did not hesitate and parley with temptation, his refusal was decided at first, and his conduct was thus consistent throughout, though he was tempted "day by day." He acted by faith, and thus you are now taught in

the scriptures to "flee youthful lusts." Faith draws strength from Christ, through whom alone the young can be preserved from the numerous snares which beset their path.

Knowing, as I do, the dangers and temptations which the young must encounter, and that nothing but the grace of God can keep them from evil, I feel very anxious for you, now that you are removed from the watchful care of your parents. You have had many religious advantages; and I know that you respect the christian character, and are attentive to the outward observances of religion: but, my dear boy, what are these without decision of heart, without supreme love to Christ, entire reliance on his mediation, and total devotedness of mind, and soul, and life to him? The claim of God is to our "*all;*" he will not be satisfied with a part: he says, "My Son, give me thine heart." And is it possible, that a little outward attention, and mere expressions of respect, will be deemed a compliance with this comprehensive requisition? Vain will be the attempt to impose on Him who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. He cannot be mocked.

Indecision of character, as to spiritual concerns, is not of such a harmless nature as some persons imagine; for it opposes the commands of God, slights the grace of Christ, and grieves the Holy Spirit. "Come now, and let us reason together," saith the Lord. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden," says Christ. "The spirit and the bride say, Come: And let him that heareth say, come: And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Should such pressing invitations be treated with hes-

itating coldness, or wavering indecision? Would a perishing beggar, who received the gracious invitation of a prince to have all his wants supplied, be undecided whether he should accept the offer or not? And shall sinful perishing man hesitate and slight the invitation, and be undecided whether to accept the offer of his God or not? Oh, the infinite folly, and madness, and perverseness of the human heart! —exceeded by naught, save by the grace, and condescension, and compassion of Christ!

Not only is the undecided person opposed to God, but also to himself, as it respects his own comfort and happiness: "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." I have heard of some persons who were said "to have had enough religion to make them miserable, but not enough to make them happy." These were no doubt undecided characters, they wished to have their portion here, and yet also to claim a reversion in the skies; but this is impossible. Opposite principles maintain perpetual warfare in such bosoms, and thus the "double minded man is unstable in all his ways." We have no right to expect the comforts of religion unless we are entirely decided; the promises of God cannot be claimed by the half-hearted, they are only the portion of him who trusts in the Lord with all his heart, and leans not unto his own understanding. The most decided christians are commonly the most happy christians. Indeed, without decision, a man may have the name, but is not entitled to the character of a christian indeed; his house is not "founded on a rock."

And now, my dear William, after these mere general remarks, I would press the subject of decision of character on your heart, with all the anxiety of a

father, who can say, with sincerity, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." 3 John 4. If decision be necessary to persons of all ages, it is of special importance to the young, of infinite importance to you. You have had some impressions; O let them not be like the morning cloud and the early dew, which soon vanish away! Think of Felix, who trembled and said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee." Those who delay have no reason to expect that the convenient season will ever arrive. Remember, that the longer you delay to be decided, the more difficult will it become; excuses will be multiplied, temptations will arise, and conscientious feelings be weakened. The "first-fruits," under the Jewish dispensation, were to be dedicated to God; so should your earliest affections and youthful energies be surrendered as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. xii. 1.

Take this letter, retire to your closet, search the scriptures; examine your own heart, and pray earnestly for the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit; seriously contemplate the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, who never was undecided on our behalf, though we are too often undecided towards him; look to him continually for strength, "for we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us;" consider the value of your soul—the import of the word ETERNITY; and, O my dear boy, BE DECIDED FOR GOD IN THE DAYS OF YOUR YOUTH.

CHAP. V.

STORIES

FOR THE YOUNGER CHILDREN.

WHAT HONOR MEANS.

HENRY was a bright little boy, just learning to read. His mother usually spent half an hour with him every morning, sometimes hearing him spell out easy sentences, sometimes reading stories to him, and at others, she taught him to repeat texts from the Bible or simple hymns.

"Come to me, Henry," said his mother to him, one day. "You may put away your blocks and little wagon first."

"Yes, mother," said the little boy, and he hastily gathered up the blocks in his apron, and tumbled them into a large basket. "When I obey quick, then I'm a good boy."

"Yes, my dear—I can't read you a story to-day. I have a text for you to learn."

"But mother, I had rather hear a story. Aunt Mary always tells me stories when I want her to. I love to hear stories. Why can't you tell me one?"

"I think it is best to have you learn a verse to-day," replied his mother.

Henry, who had never been allowed to tease, had nothing more to say. He repeated pleasantly the verse given him, which was "Honor thy father and mother."

"But what does *honor* mean?" said he, after repeating it once or twice. "Does it mean to have

the father's and mother's ride on a handsome horse?"

"No indeed. But why did you ask that question?"

"Why, you told me about Mordecai and Haman. Mordecai rode on a handsome horse because the king wanted to honor him."

"I am glad you remember something about the story. Can you tell me why the king wanted to honor him?"

"Yes, mother. Mordecai was a poor man. He saved the king's life once. Two wicked men wanted to kill him."

"Yes, that is right. Mordecai had done the king a great kindness, but the king did not make him any present, or reward him in any way. He might have told him he was much obliged to him, but that was all. An account of it was written in a book, and then he seemed to forget all about it. Here were many other things written in the same book. One night, when he was tired and could not go to sleep, he asked some one to read to him, and the person read what was written about Mordecai. Then the king was sorry that he had forgotten Mordecai. He wanted to show him some attention or respect, or to *honor* him, so that Mordecai might know, and all the people might know, that the king was grateful to him. He thought the best way to do it, was to have him put on a suit of the king's clothes and to ride on his beautiful horse through all the streets, so that every one might see how highly the king thought of Mordecai."

"But the word honor in this text means a great deal more. I will tell you when you honor your mother."

"If I asked you to go down stairs and get my thimble, that I left on the table, and you should pleas-

antly leave your play and run and get it, you would honor me."

"Did I honor you when I picked up my blocks quick and put them away, when you told me ?"

"Yes, Henry; so, you see, that to *obey* is one thing that honor means. Whenever you do cheerfully and quick what your mother tells you to do, and what you think she would like to have you do, even if she does not ask you, then you honor her."

"I might be very sick and lie on the bed all day, and not be able to say any thing to my little boy. If you were to be very careful not to make any noise to disturb me and not trouble any one in the parlor or the kitchen, because you knew that if you did any thing that was wrong it would make me very sorry and more sick, then you would honor me. Whenever you help me in any way, or are kind to me, you honor me. You know, you sometimes take care of your little sister for me when I am busy, and go up stairs and down stairs for me when I am at work."

"Do you remember Mr. Williams, the man who made your shoes ?"

"Yes, mother; he measured my foot with a stick."

"Well, Mr. Williams is a poor man and lives in a small house, but he honors his mother. He was a little boy once and his mother took care of him, just as your mother takes care of you. She gave him his breakfast and supper, and a soft bed to sleep on at night. When he was sick she was very kind to him, and held him in her arms or rocked him in the cradle and watched over him till he got well. Now he is a tall man. His mother is old and feeble. She is blind, but her son is very kind to her. He remembers how kind she was to him. He gives her

her clothes, and gets a good breakfast and dinner and supper for her every day. Sundays he leads her to meeting, because she cannot see. He tries to do all he can to make her happy."

"Now, God wants you and all children, to honor their fathers and mothers by being grateful to them for their kindness, and by treating them with respect and affection."

THE WALK.

Julia and Maria were twin sisters, only children of Mr. and Mrs. Packard. They resided in a small village, about 40 miles from Boston.

Julia and Maria were about eight years old when their mother was attacked by a fever which confined her for a long time. The little girls were very attentive to her during her illness, and assisted the nurse as much as they could, to make her comfortable.

They both attended school about half a mile from the house. Their mother had requested them to be at home, especially during her sickness, as early as six o'clock, that she might know they were safe, and not feel anxious about them. They had been very punctual for many days, not having failed in a single instance to be in their mother's house, before the clock struck, to receive from her an approving smile. But, one delightful afternoon, in the beginning of summer, Julia and Maria lingered longer than usual about the school-house steps. It was so pleasant, they wished they could go and take

a walk. "It is only half past five," said Julia, "and we shan't stay long. Mother won't miss us."

They knew their mother would expect them at six, but then, as they had always been so punctual, they thought that *just for once*, it wouldn't do any hurt to be a *little* late.

"Well, come,—let's go," said Julia, after they had hesitated for some time. Maria, who was always accustomed to do as Julia did, started with her. She felt a little uneasiness as she turned round to close the little gate, and beheld from the gentle eminence, her own home. Their eyes rested on their mother's room; they saw the shutters were closed, and they well remembered their pale sickly parent was within. But still they concluded to go on. They knew that a little farther on, there was a nest of little birds, and they thought they should like to go and see them. They arrived at the spot, just as the clock was striking six. Oh! if they could have only known how anxiously their mother was watching for them after six o'clock had arrived, they could not have gone any farther.

Julia and Maria did not notice the striking of the clock. They were trying to find a place, where they could stand and watch the little birds. "Oh! I mean to have one to carry home," said Maria, and she put her hand into the nest, and in an instant held fast a little bird. How delighted she was, when she held the little prisoner, and thought she could have it for her own. She did not consider that the parent bird could miss and mourn for it.

They continued their rambles. Maria once fell down, in trying to climb over a fence, and once stepped her foot into a ditch. Julia, too, tore her frock with the thorns on the bushes, and cut her arm, so

as to make it bleed. But they did not mind these troubles much till they were on their way for home. But Maria and Julia both found that they had not enjoyed themselves quite as much as they expected, and then Maria began to think of her little bird: she had forgotten till now that she had no cage for it, and she did not know what food it took; she was afraid it would die. She felt very uneasy, and wished she had not touched the bird.

It was growing dark. The little girls had staid longer than they had intended; they felt hungry, and tired, and very unhappy too, for they knew that very soon they must see their kind mother, and they dreaded to meet her.

They entered the house softly, hung their bonnets up in the usual place, and walked softly into the parlor. There was no one there. They stood looking at one another, and hesitating, not knowing what was to be done. Must they go into their mother's room, and see her in their torn frocks and muddy shoes?

"What shall we say to mother," said Maria, "when she asks us where we have been;—Oh, let's say we were late at school, for we were, you know; —school was not done till half an hour later than usual." "But then," said Julia, "she'll know we did not stay all this while, so let's *tell* her all about it." "Oh dear, I don't want to," said Maria, "don't you wish we had not gone?"

"Ay, *I* wish you had not gone," exclaimed Thomas, one of the hired men, who had overheard the last sentence,—"for then, I'd have been saved an hour's chase after you."

The girls looked at one another with surprise and fear. "Why miss," continued he, "your father, and George, and I, have been searching for you this

half hour, because your mother was so frightened."

Thomas disappeared, to tell the news of their return, and Julia and Maria determined at once to go and confess all to their mother. They walked softly up the stairs, and gently knocked at the door. Nurse came to the door; she put her finger on her lip, to signify that they must not speak, while at the same time, she looked at them as they never before had seen her. That moment their mother spoke, and nurse ran to the bedside. The door was just open, and the children distinctly heard their mother's low voice, enquiring if they had returned. They thought she seemed more feeble than, when, in the morning, she requested to see the children. How sorry and grieved they felt as they walked softly across the room, and stood by their mother's bedside.

"Why, my children! where have you been," said she, taking a hand of each,—"How could you stay from me so long?" The little girls held down their heads and burst into tears. At length Maria said, "We went to walk down by the willow-trees, and found a nest of birds; we did not know it was so late."

As she said these words, she looked into her mother's face. She looked very pale, and more sick than she had seemed, and Maria trembled when she thought,—*what if she should die to-night!* how I wish I had not gone to walk.

Mrs. Packard was in reality much worse. She was too much exhausted to talk with the children, and they were obliged to leave her. Oh, how they felt when they received the usual kiss, and kind "Good night," from their dear mother, and how sorry they felt to think they had disobeyed her.

Children are always punished for doing wrong; for, though they may not receive either punishment or reproof from their parents, they will always suffer in their minds, unless they are very much hardened indeed.

DUTY AND THE RABBITS.

An older sister had usually accompanied little Alice to her school, but circumstances rendered it necessary that she should be placed for a time, under the protection of her brother James. James was fond of Alice, and seemed much pleased with the idea of enjoying the company of the little prattler on his long walk to school.

"Oh! dear!" said James one morning, as he looked at the clock, twenty minutes of nine! I shall certainly be late." As he said his the crowded his books into his satchel and caught up his cap from the table. In a moment he was half way down to the garden-gate, when suddenly recollecting Alice, he turned somewhat impatiently to look for her. She was just coming out of the door, and looked so smiling and happy, that James could not help pleasantly saying, "Why Alice, you look as fresh and blooming as a rose."

"James," said his mother as she stood at the window watching their departure, "take good care of your sister."

They walked on for some time silently. James was thinking of his Latin Grammar, and Alice was busy in plucking all the prettiest flowers and ar-

ranging them into a nosegay for her teacher. Presently they came to the top of a hill which over-looked the school-house. James saw a number of his companions standing before the door apparently much engaged in conversation. He was very eager to join them, and began to run, and to urge on after him his little sister. Alice had walked much faster than usual all the way, and now really felt herself unable to keep up with her brother.

"James," said she, "*do* wait for me. Come and take hold of my hand. I'm tired, and I can't walk any faster."

"Oh!" said he, "I cannot come back. I am in a great hurry, but I will wait for you till you get up to me."

Alice attempted to run and seize the hand which James held out to her, but unluckily she tripped against a stone, and fell to the ground.

James was busy in brushing off the dirt and dust from Alice's delicate dress, and endeavoring to divert her attention from her soiled apron, when some one called to him from behind. Upon turning round he perceived his school-mate, Tom, running towards him.

"Holloa! James," said he, "What makes you so late this morning? I've come to tell you that William Stone has got his rabbits, and we are all going to see them after school. There are four of them. Two white ones and two gray ones."

"Oh! I should be delighted to go," said James, "but," continued he, hesitating and speaking in rather a low tone of voice, "I don't believe I can."

"Don't believe you can," said Tom. "Why not?"

"Why, I suppose I must go home with my sister," replied James.

"Nonsense!" said Tom, "just as if she couldn't find her way home without you. But come along," continued he, pulling James by the arm, "or we shall be late."

They at length arrived at the little school-house where Alice was to be left.

"Shall I wait for you under the elm-tree?" said she, as they parted. James did not answer her, for he was very busy just then, contriving some plan, by which he might get his sister safely home, and go and see the rabbits too.

"Oh! now I know how I can manage it," thought he, "I will run over in recess and tell her to go home with the Nelson's. Mother won't care just for once, if she does walk with them."

In recess he ran over to tell Alice his plan, but the Nelsons were absent that day from school, and he was almost glad of it, for he secretly felt that his mother would not have approved of such a plan. But what should he do. He considered for some time, and then told Alice that she might start for home alone when school was done, and that he would try to overtake her.

After school James with the other boys went to see the rabbits. They lingered to admire and wonder at the little animals, till William Stone was called to dinner. The moment James turned to go home, he thought of Alice. He ran as fast as he could through the village till he arrived at the church. He looked at the clock and saw that it was just one. Giving up now all hopes of overtaking Alice, he walked slowly and thoughtfully home.

As he approached the garden-gate, he thought everything seemed very still and quiet, and he feared that his little sister might not have arrived home,

or that some accident had befallen her. His fears were soon dispelled however, for on going into the parlor, he found her safe and happy, playing with her doll. Upon inquiring he learned that her teacher had taken charge of her on her way home. His mother had gone to visit a friend, and who would know that James had not fulfilled his duty towards his sister ?

The next day was damp and unpleasant, and it was a matter of some discussion whether it was best for Alice to go to school. After considerable conversation on the subject, James' mother suddenly turned to him and said, "James you can take good care of her, and I think she had better go. There will be some wet places, but you can lift her over, and by noon, I think it may be pleasant."

James blushed at the remembrance of his conduct the day before, but no one observed it.

"Oh ! yes," said he, "do let her go. I will take good care of her."

"I have no doubt of it," said his mother, "I can assure you I should not trust my little girl in the hands of an unfaithful boy."

"I wish," thought James, as she said this, "that my mother could always repose confidence in me. It shall not be my fault, if she does not, in future. How I wish I had done my duty yesterday. I might have seen the rabbits another time. I do not merit my mother's praise. How mean and dishonorable it is for me to receive praise when I do not deserve it. I wish she knew of my conduct yesterday: I must tell her."

He looked up from the book on which he had been unconsciously gazing. Nobody was in the room but his mother.

"James," said she, "I am going into town this afternoon, should you like to go with me?

"Oh! yes," said James, "very much indeed, but——

"But what?" asked his mother.

"But I did something wrong which I must tell you of first," replied James.

"Wrong James," said his mother, "explain yourself."

"Why, I left Alice to come home alone yesterday noon, while I went to see William Stone's rabbits."

"I thought Alice was safe under *your* care, James," said his mother, "I am very glad however that you have told me how it was. There is always some hope of children when they acknowledge it frankly, when they have done wrong. You certainly did wrong; you betrayed a trust; you proved an unfaithful protector."

"I think I shall always take good care of Alice in future," said James.

"I hope you will," said his mother," but you know you are easily led astray by temptation. I am sorry I cannot take you into town this afternoon, but I must deny myself the pleasure. However, you will spend a much happier afternoon at home, than you could have done in town with a burdened conscience. You must learn to *persevere in duty*, and to *resist temptation*. I hope by staying at home this afternoon, you will longer remember this hard lesson."

Just then little Alice made her appearance equipped tor school, and the conversation was interrupted.

EVENING TALK.

Mary and Ellen did not lay aside their playthings until it was quite dark. They had sometimes thought that they never should be tired of play, but this evening, as they put their doll into the cradle, and piled up their cups and saucers, they felt that it would be pleasant to go and sit quietly in the parlor with their mother. How good God is to send us the night. He knows that we need rest and quiet, and that if it were always day, men would wear themselves out with continued study or work, and that little boys and girls would make themselves sick by their long plays.

Mary and Ellen ran into the parlor. They found their mother sitting alone. Mary threw herself down on the sofa, and little Ellen asked her mother to hold her.

"Mary," said their mother, after a little pause, "did you ever hear the word reluctantly?"

Ellen said she never remembered to have heard it.

"Well then," continued Mrs. B. "if you are not too tired, I should like to explain two or three words to you this evening."

"Oh! yes," said Mary, "do talk to us. We like to have you."

"The other day," said Mrs. B., "I asked a little girl to go up stairs and get my work-basket." "Oh mother!" she said, "I'm so tired, Can't Mary go?" I looked at the little girl as she said this, and saw scowls on her forehead, and a very cross expression in her face. When she saw me looking at her, she got down from her chair, walked very slowly across

the room, and shut the door to, harder than usual, as if she was a little angry."

"Oh! I know who you mean," said Ellen laughing, "you mean me."

"Well," said her mother. "you did not obey me willingly and cheerfully in this case, but very *reluctantly*. Now Mary you may bring me that green covered book on the piano, but you may obey me *reluctantly*.

"Why I don't know how to do it," said Mary, laughing.

"I will tell you," said her mother. "In the first place, you must not start from your seat the moment I speak to you, but, you may move round a little very slowly, and look as if you did not want to be disturbed. When you walk across the floor you must step heavily, and make a little unnecessary noise; and instead of placing the book properly in my hand, you must give it a kind of toss into my lap."

Mary performed her part very well, only she tossed the book upon the floor instead of her mother's lap.

"Now," said their mother, "I think you understand what is meant by 'obeying reluctantly;' but there is another kind of obedience which I should like to explain to you. Some children obey with *alacrity*. The other day, for example, little Charly dropped an orange out of the window. "James," said I, 'run and get that orange down by the garden-gate." James, instantly laid aside his book, ran down stairs, and returned in a moment with the orange, which he pleasantly offered to his little brother."

"Mother," said little Ellen, "may I obey with alacrity?"

"Oh! yes," said her mother, smiling; "I hope you will always do so. You may go now and shut the closet door."

Mary jumped down from her mother's lap, ran across the room, shut the door, and was back again in a moment.

"Very well, very well indeed," said her mother. "I hope Mary will remember always to obey with alacrity. Now, I have a proposal to make to you and Ellen; that is, something which you may do or not do, as you please. I wish you to make a resolution, that, for two days, you will endeavor to obey me with alacrity. I will keep an account of the number of times you obey reluctantly, and of the number of times you obey cheerfully. Should you like this plan?"

"Oh! yes," said Mary; "when shall we begin?"

"You may begin to-night," said Mrs. B., "if you please."

"To-night is Saturday night," said Mary; "Monday evening you will read us the account. Shall you show it to father?"

"If you have no objection. I think he would like to see it," replied her mother.

"Oh! no," said Mary, "I mean to ask him to guess how many times we have obeyed reluctantly, and how many times with alacrity."

"I don't mean to obey reluctantly once," said little Ellen.

"Nor I either," said Mary.

"I dare say you mean to do right, my children," said their mother. "I expect you to succeed very well, but not perfectly. You will sometimes forget your resolution, and sometimes it will be very hard for you to obey. But Sarah has come to take you to bed now, so good night."

Mary and Ellen were very sorry to leave their

mother just now, but they remembered their good resolution, and walked quietly out of the room.

VISITS TO A COTTAGE.

On a sultry evening, in the month of August, while on a visit to the south of England, I wandered forth to take the fresh air, as I knew I could find but little in the crowded town. I had not proceeded far before I came to a clear bubbling spring; on the root of a tree by its bank sat a little girl with a brown pitcher in her hand, which she was going to fill. She was leaning her elbows on her knees, and her head on her hands, and seemed to be deep in thought.

I stood behind a bush and watched her for a moment, but I found that though she loved the spot, she knew it

was her duty, when she was sent on an errand, to be as quick as possible, and therefore I saw that she rose, filled her pitcher, and was going away, when I called to her.

Here I would put in a word. My dear child, *mind this;* whenever you are sent on an errand, make haste, never loiter on the way, never idly stop to talk with your playmates, never engage in any game, nor stop to look at any thing in the shops, but be attentive to get what is wanted, and then return straight home.

"Stop, little girl," said I. She instantly turned round, and dropping a modest curtsey, said, "Yes, Ma'am." "And what is your name?" asked I. "My name," said she, "is Mary Barker." "How old are you?" "Just thirteen." "Can you read?" "Yes, Ma'am, I attend a Sunday School." "Well," said I, "as you are sent on an errand, let us walk on, and then I shall not detain you. Are your father and mother living?" "Yes, Ma'am, both of them, and I have three brothers and two sisters, and I am the eldest." "I hope you endeavor to make yourself useful?" Mary blushed, and looking on the ground, said, "I try, Ma'am."

After some conversation in respect to her school, and what she learned there, we at length nearly reached her cottage, and our conversation ceased; but I was pleased, exceedingly pleased, to hear how seriously and correctly she answered my questions in scripture language, which clearly proved to me that she had profited by the instructions she had received, and that her Teacher's labor had not been in vain.

There is one thing more I have to notice before I proceed, which is, that Mary was a pattern for neatness in her dress; *she was dressed as Sunday School girls ought to be;* there was none of that ridiculous finery about her, which, I am sorry to say, some children so much love.

There were no rings in her ears, there were no paltry beads round her neck, but she had on a neat straw bonnet, a white tippet, and a blue cotton frock, and as she was busy, I saw also that she wore a coarse apron. Now all this was very well, but I really am sometimes ashamed to see the untidy and silly dress of some of our Sunday scholars. Now in Mary, there were no ruffles round her sleeves, no sash round her waist, but to sum up all in a few words, *she was clean, neat, and tidy.*

And how much more we respect those, in the lower ranks of life, whose dress is becoming and modest, for, though girls dress ever so fine, we never think they are *ladies* any the more for that. You will remember these hints.

When we arrived at the cottage, Mary said, "Will you walk in, Ma'am?" I agreed, and we both entered. Mary's mother, who was rocking a cradle, rose to receive me; and indeed after my walk I was glad of rest. The wooden chairs looked so white and clean, and the floor was so nicely sanded, that it was a pleasure to look at it.

"I trust," said I, to Mrs. Barker, "that I am no intruder."

"I am sure I am very glad to see you, Ma'am," said she.

Finding I was cordially received, I approached the cradle, in which lay a nice boy, about six months old, fast asleep; I could not refrain from kissing him. But I soon found that my kisses disturbed the rosy babe, and he began to stir about, as though he thought of waking; I covered him up, for I thought I should be indeed an intruder if I roused him; and he soon sunk again into his quiet repose. I took my seat once more, and began to inquire for the other parts of the family.

"And so you have six children, Mrs. Barker," said I.

"Yes, Ma'am, Mary is the eldest, and a useful girl she

When we arrived at the cottage, Mary said, "Will you walk in, Ma'am?"—See p. 148.

is (Mary was not in the room); I don't know what I could do without her; Susan and Thomas are the next, then James, Sarah, and this infant: poor Susan is very ill; would you like to walk up and see her?"

I agreed, and James, who was present, was left in charge of the young one. In a bed, by the side of her mother's, lay the suffering Susan; she was about twelve years of age, and was suffering from the severe effects of disease.

"Does any doctor attend her?" I asked.

"No," answered the weeping mother, "they have all given her over; no medicine can do her any good; she has been ill now for some months."

"I am a Sunday School Teacher myself, and have often visited my sick scholars: do you think she would like that I should say a few words to her?"

"Oh yes, Ma'am, that she would, I am sure, for she is very fond of talking about good things with the teachers of her own Sunday School, who often come to visit her."

As I have found that sick people like to talk best to any friend when *alone*, I nodded to her mother, who immediately left the room. When she had retired, I undrew the curtains which surrounded the patient, and sitting down, I took her hand, which lay outside of the bed-clothes, and I said in as tender a manner as I could,

"My dear little girl, are you ill?"

Her wasted frame, her trembling pulse, tearing cough, and rattling breath, but too plainly told me so, but I wished to know in what light she viewed her own illness.

"Yes," she feebly whispered, "I am very ill."

"And do you think you shall die?"

"Yes, I think I shall."

"Have you any hope of heaven?"

"Yes, but it is a hope I don't deserve."

"Do you find the Redeemer precious to your soul?"

"Yes, he is very precious: I can lie here when I am alone, and think of Jesus, and sometimes when I am tired of lying awake, and weary with coughing, I think of Him, and I remember that He had not a bed to lie upon, and then I recollect how thankful I ought to be."

"But," said I, "do you never consider yourself a sinner?"

"Oh! yes," she said, "the very worst of sinners," and then with a sweet smile, "but I hope I am a ransomed sinner."

"Have you then good reason to believe that you have been pardoned and saved through Christ?"

"Yes, I hope that I have."

All this was said so simply, so solemnly, and with a voice so earnest, and yet so trembling, that I could not doubt her sincerity. And why should I have done it? I trust that Susan was a little lamb in the Saviour's fold, and I think that in him alone, she hoped to be accepted and blessed. I inquired if I should pray with her. She seemed glad to hear this, and I kneeled down and spent a few minutes in prayer, and she concluded my petitions by an Amen that seemed to come from her heart.

I went down stairs to her mother, and found that she had, in my absence, assembled the rest of her children together, that I might see them all. Mary, who was always industrious, had cleaned the fire-place, and put on the water for tea, and had just sat down to work.

"Your daughter seems very ill, Mrs. Barker," said I.

"Oh! yes, Ma'am, she is indeed."

"But I am pleased," I continued, "to find her particularly thoughtful."

"Yes, I hope she is a partaker of the grace of God."

"Do you know of any means which became effectual in producing this great change?"

"I believe," replied Mrs. Barker, "that it was the in-

structions she received at the Sunday School. If you ask her, her answer always is, 'I have indeed reason to bless God for the Sunday School.'"

This intelligence was encouraging and pleasant. May you, my dear girls who read this, also be made the followers of the Lamb. But you wish to know something of the other children; well then, I will tell you. Thomas was a fine lad, with brown hair and a sun-burnt face. James was a very thin little fellow, but I thought I liked his countenance better than Thomas's, for when I spoke to him he looked so kind and good-natured, and when I told him of his poor dying sister, he cried very much, and I understood that he rendered her many kind services.

My children, hear this:—have you a brother or a sister ill? O do not be unkind to them; supply every want you can, for they may soon be no more. Go, then, and talk to them, and read to them, and do every thing for them that you can.

The other child, Sarah, was but two years old, and I did not see much of her. I distributed some little books among the children, and after one more kiss of the babe, I took my leave, promising to call again. Mary accompanied me home great part of the way, and I found her quite a companion. We talked of the kind mother she had, and of her afflicted sister, and though I do not think Mary *had any knowledge above her years*, yet she seemed to be a good girl. It was evident that her father and mother had brought up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—brought them up in that way, from which they hoped they would never depart.

Mary wished me very much to go the next Sabbath to see the Sunday School where she attended; but as I did not know any of the teachers, and as I was quite a stranger, I declined it. I suppose she wanted me to see how quiet the girls stood in their classes, how well they said

their lessons, and how they loved their teachers; for Mary was very fond of the school, and she was glad for any one to see it. When Mary took her leave, she said she hoped I should soon call again; indeed I wanted but little persuasion, for I always find it a pleasure to visit a poor family that is contented and happy.

A few days after this, I again walked to the neat cottage of the Barkers, and was again most cordially received. The infant was awake and laughing in his way, and so pleased was I, that I took him in my arms, and held him for a considerable time. Mary had been nurse that day, for though she was not so fond of babies as I am, yet she knew it was right to assist her mother in any way she could.

My dear little girls, here is a lesson for you. I fear that some of you, when you are told to take the baby, pout and cry, and say you want to play, and make many more excuses, and your mothers are obliged to insist upon your doing it, and to make you take the child. Now how naughty this is! think what trouble your anxious mother took with you when you were a babe; how she fed you and attended you day after day, and month after month, and how she was wearied by stooping to teach you to walk, and how she comforted you when you fell, and yet you object to do the least thing for her. Oh, unkind child! and unkind sister!

Mary was a very different girl; her mother never had to ask her twice to do any thing, and though she very often had to nurse Sarah, who was a fretful, unruly girl, Mary seldom complained, and why?—Because she loved her Saviour, and knew that he had said, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

When I entered the cottage, I found Mrs. Barker below, and was informed that Mary was taking care of her sister. I walked softly up stairs, and hearing Mary's

voice as if engaged in prayer, I stopped at the door, and heard her offer the following petitions.

"O thou God of mercy, thou hearer and answerer of prayer, suffer a poor, guilty sinner to come before thee: do not send me empty away; do not deny my request; look in tenderness on my dying sister; support her weak body; comfort her soul; give her thy grace; hast thou not a blessing for her?—Bless her, oh my Father! teach us ALL to submit. Let us all say, 'Thy will be done,' and let us not only say it, but *let us feel it too.*"——Here Mary's tears forbade her utterance; religion and natural affection were striving together, but she overcame her emotions, and continued praying.

When I entered the room, the scene was such as I shall never forget. The setting sun, which had tinged the glowing western skies, shone through the window-casement, and his fading beams fell on the pale and languid countenance of Susan.

I noticed that the bed-room window was open, and the poor sufferer was propped up by pillows, for she could not breathe when lying down. Death indeed appeared upon her countenance, but it was not in a form of terror.

My little reader, are you afraid to die? Do you shrink at the thoughts of death? Learn of Susan that

> "Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are."

But if you are not prepared for so solemn a change, you *ought* indeed to be afraid to die.

I perceived that Susan's eyes were shut, and that she was breathing very hard. "Well, Susan," said I, "and how do you feel in the prospect of death?"

"I feel very anxious, Ma'am," said she.

"Why anxious, my dear?" I asked.

"Because," she replied, "now I am so near death, it seems a very solemn thing to die."

"It is a solemn thing, Susan, but I hope that you are ready to meet it, and to rejoice in the hope of soon being with your Saviour."

"Yes, I know in whom I have believed."

"Have you thought on what I said to you?"

"I have thought of it night and day."

"Have you prayed much?"

"I can't pray as I would; Mary prays with me."

"Do you read the Bible?"

"Mary reads it to me, but I cannot see."

Soon after, Mary left the room, and Mrs. Barker coming up, I departed, promising, that if Susan should be spared, I would call early the next day. Full of musing reflections, I sought my own home.

> "Dear little children, who may read
> This simple story through,
> Pray think that death may come with speed,
> And bitter pains for you."

But let me ask, Could you have prayed as Mary did? *She prayed from her heart;* she felt what she said. That is *true prayer*, my children, which we *really feel;* and if you have not prayed so, you have never prayed at all. Mary knew that God is a Spirit, and you know it too, your Teachers have taught you so; but I am afraid but few worship him as Mary did, "*in spirit and in truth.*"

Do you ever go by yourselves to pray to the Saviour? If you do not pray to the Most High in the morning, how can you expect that He will take care of you through the day; and if you do not pray to Him in the evening, why should you expect that He will take care of you through the night? Go, and fall down on your knees this day, and pray to your Saviour, and He will look with

love upon you, and like as he did to the young ones of old, he will put His hands upon you, and will bless you.

In my slumbers I dreamed of Susan, and she was present in my thoughts the first thing in the morning, and as soon as I was ready I went to her cottage. Mary had not lain down all the night, for Sarah had been very poorly, and she had been obliged to attend to her; and Mrs. Barker ever since I had left her had been with Susan, who was still alive. It was very early: the dew hung upon the leaves, and the other children were asleep. Without delay I found my way to the sick chamber, and there I saw the mother watching her child, and the father sitting by her side with the utmost anxiety in his countenance. He left the room when I appeared, that his little girl might not be hurried by too many attendants.

"Mrs. Barker," said I, to the sorrowing parent, "this is a trial of faith."

"Oh! it is indeed," said she, "no one can tell what I feel."

When Susan heard the sound of my voice, she held out her hand, and looking steadfastly at me, said, "Dying is hard work, Ma'am."

"What, have you been in much pain since I saw you?"

"Oh, very great pain," replied she. "Where can I go?"

These exclamations I had not expected to hear, but I soon afterwards understood that she had been strongly convulsed all the night, and that she was then in a good deal of agony.

"Patience," said I, "Susan, patience must have her perfect work."

"Yes," answered she, "it must, it must; it won't be much longer, do you think it will?"

"No, my love," I replied, "it surely can't be much lon-

ger." But as I thought she might continue for a few hours, and as I had resolved not to leave her as long as she did live, I prevailed on Mrs. Barker to lie down, whilst I promised to take all needful care of Susan, and in case she should be taken worse to let her know it.—She did so, and went to Mary's bed, leaving me alone with Susan.

Ah! my girls, there is something very, very solemn in death. Did you ever see a person die? Did you ever see a body after death? If you have, say, is it not a solemn thing? You cannot tell how serious I felt; it was no time to trifle. There was an immortal spirit about to take its flight to the unseen world.

Susan appeared stronger; but her strength was the agony of death; yet she was enabled to converse with greater ease with me than before, and though she was a poor child and was covered with a patchwork quilt, yet I thought it an honor and a pleasure to smooth her dying pillow, and to encourage her while passing through the dark valley. Ah! I wish I could have taken you to the bed-side of that pious Sunday scholar; you might have seen how a young Christian died. The religion of Jesus, you know, is the same thing with the young as it is with the old; it is a changing and a sanctifying principle, it forms the mind anew.

"What should I do now," said Susan, "if I had now to seek a Saviour! but blessed be his holy name, I love him, and I shall love him to the end, he will not leave me;" and then she paused, and looking at me said, "Do you think he will?"

"No," said I.

> "His honor is engaged to save
> The *meanest* of his sheep."

Then we talked upon the songs of angels, their white robes and their palms of victory, and many more things.

But in about an hour and a half after this, Susan's countenance changed, and in dying accents she asked for some water; I saw she was nearly gone, and with all possible haste I moistened her blue and stiffening lips; the water revived her, and she seemed better, but was again fearfully convulsed—I was alarmed, and knocked with my foot on the creaking boards, which brought Mary up.

"Call your mother," said I. Mrs. Barker soon came. We rubbed her limbs, we prayed that she might have an easy death; we entreated that support might be granted her, and the Almighty in mercy heard our prayers, and after a while she grew easier and more calm.

"Let me get up," she said, for she knew not what to do—I raised her in the bed, supported her in my arms, and she leaned her weary head on my shoulder. I read to her the xivth chapter of St. John's Gospel, upon which she spoke some words by which her father, mother, brothers and sisters were melted to tears. The drops of grief fell from her eyes when she thought of parting with friends so dear; yet she kissed them all, said many things expressive of her joy at the prospect of endless glory; and then asked me to read a hymn. As I was reading the last verse but one, which begins

> "Then when ye hear my heart-strings break,
> How sweet my minutes roll,"

she gently sighed twice; fell back on the pillow; the struggle was past, the conflict was ended, and her soul, freed from the body, sped its triumphant way to her Father and to your Father, to her God and to your God.

Poor Mary, when she saw her sister was gone, gave vent to her feelings; and as for poor little James, he was quite inconsolable; he took Susan's hand, and kissed it again and again, stroked her hair down, and was very much grieved; but the language of Mrs. Barker's heart

was what it ought to have been—"The will of the Lord be done."

I persuaded all the children to go down stairs with me; and afterwards I went to a neighbor, to beg her attendance at the house. I said a few words respecting the uncertainty of health and life; bid Mary be of good comfort, and look towards that time when her sister should appear in the clouds of heaven, and directed her to watch, lest her Lord coming suddenly should find her sleeping.

A few days afterwards I waited upon the minister who had visited Susan in her illness, and requested him to preach a funeral sermon for the departed girl to the youth of the parish, which he kindly consented to do.

On the day appointed for Susan's burial I attended at the cottage, and took Mary and Sarah two neat black frocks, and black strings for their bonnets, for which they were very thankful.

Little Susan's coffin was very plain; there were no shining handles; no rows of expensive nails; no trappings of cloth, but every thing was very plain.

Ah! dear children, it is of very little consequence what becomes of the body when the soul is gone. "Foul steps," you know, "will measure your narrow home," "the house appointed for all living;" you will not occupy much space in the ground. Your teachers do not mind the body, they care about *your souls;* we want you to care about yourselves; we want you to remember that "time is short," and that you must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Do not disappoint our hopes, but let us hear you asking in sincerity, What must I do to be saved?

I saw Susan's corpse before the coffin was screwed down; *her face was calm, but her lips were dark and cold;* I put my hand to her side, but her heart did not beat; no, my girls, that heart, which once beat with pleasure as

she joined her companions in play, moved no longer. I and James touched her cheek, but that also was cold; James took hold of her hand, but it was stiff and stretched out, and with sobs he said, "Will she rise again?" "Yes," answered I, "James, she will rise again; this body shall one day be very glorious to behold, and no pain will again disturb her, for the days of her mourning are ended."

"Yes," replied Mary, who stood at the foot of the coffin, nursing the infant, "and this comforts me, that our Susan will rise again, and we shall see her clothed afresh."

James assisted me in gathering some flowers and putting them in the coffin, because as he said, "She shall look nicely when John and Jane come to see her," meaning two of her former playmates. John and Jane soon afterwards came, and we talked again about dying; and James had that morning told his school-fellow, "there was no fear but that Susan was gone to heaven, because she loved Christ and believed in him."

Then the coffin was screwed down, and preparations were made to take it to the grave. There was no hearse with black feathers on; there were no black horses and mourning coach to take Susan to the grave, but four young men of the parish carried her on their shoulders, and four young women dressed in white, with bunches of flowers in their hands, walked by the side. Her father and mother followed behind, and then Mary, and Thomas, and James, whilst Sarah and the baby remained at home in care of a neighbor.

I went to the church-yard, the bell tolled very solemnly: the clergyman who offered the prayer, seemed very serious too; James and Mary looked melancholy, and Mrs. Barker cried very much when they were putting Susan into the ground. I looked into the grave, and

thought how soon I might perhaps lie as low, and as I gazed round on the young ones who were standing about, I could not help wishing that He who had blessed their school-fellow would bless them.

I did not see any more of the family after I left the church-yard till the next Sunday, when the minister mentioned Susan's death in his sermon, and what should you suppose his text was? It was this—"Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." If you look, you will find it in the latter part of the 41st verse of the 5th chapter of St. Mark.

It seemed like a continuation of what James and I had said; he described what death was, told his hearers how soon they might die, and then said that we must all rise again; that it would not be said to Susan Barker that she was to rise now, but that she would be raised at the last day. He next spoke of "the glory of her rising," how happy she would be, and asked his hearers how they thought they should rise at the day of judgment; and just before he finished, he told them some more about Susan, and exhorted them to follow her as far as she followed Christ, and then he concluded.

Think, my girls, about this little child; do not soon forget her, but remember how earnest she was for the blessings of salvation, and do you be the same. But, perhaps, you are saying that she was an extraordinary girl, and that you can never be so heavenly-minded as she was? No, she was not an extraordinary child, she was no more than what you, through the grace of Christ, may be yourself, for the Saviour said, "Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened;" and as the hymn says,

"Though he is not here below,
But on his heavenly hill,
To him may little children go
And seek a blessing still."

I soon found that the family of the Barkers increased in my esteem, for whenever I see true religion, even in the poorest person, it reminds me that Jesus when on earth once said, "Whosoever doeth the will of my father, the same is my mother, my sister, and my brother."

Taking a walk one day, I bent my steps to the cottage, and looking in, saw to my great pleasure, Mary very industriously employed; she was singing a hymn, and on her bended knees, with a pail of water by her side, she was scrubbing the floor of the room. "Well, Mary," said I, "you are busy to-day?" "Yes, Ma'am," replied she, jumping up and making a curtesy, "we always have the room scrubbed every Saturday afternoon."

Now as I would not on any account stop her in her useful work, I bade her good bye, and was going away; I said I was going away, but just as I put my hand on the latch of the gate to open it, I heard the sound of voices, and turning round, found under a spreading apple-tree Thomas and James with their books in their hands very studious.

I could not resist the wish I felt to speak to them, and therefore I went to the apple-tree. "And pray what

are you both doing," said I, to the little urchins, who had made themselves dirty by playing in the mud, "what are you all doing?"

"Learning our lessons for to-morrow, Ma'am."

"Learning your lessons!" said I, "this is very late to learn your lessons; I am afraid they will not be said very well."

They looked at me very slyly, as much as to say, Why no, we are rather afraid of it.

"But why," I asked, "do you put them off till afternoon? How much better it would be to learn a part every day! how much easier, and much pleasanter, and much safer, such a plan would be!"

"Let me see, Thomas," said I, "what you have to learn." Thomas showed me the morning hymn, "My God, who makes the sun to know," &c.; and the three first commandments; but when I came to hear him, I found that he could only say a few words of his hymn, and none at all of his commandments. "Oh fie, fie, Thomas!" exclaimed I, "this is sad."

Thomas burst into tears, saying, "I never shall be able to learn it, I know."

"Gently, gently," said I, "you have but just begun, you don't know what you can do till you try."

Thomas lay down on the grass with his book in his hand, and if ever I saw a boy look like a dunce he was one; and I trembled for the leaves of the book as he turned them over with his dirty fingers, as most dunces do. However, I left him like an obstinate, naughty boy as he was, and turned to James. I am sorry to be obliged to tell you, that though James was generally a good boy, yet he made a strange mistake then, for that afternoon he was not much better than his brother. He had three verses of Watts's Hymns to learn, and some Catechism, but instead of being sulky like Thomas, he

said with a smiling face, "I shall soon know it if I try." I hope, though I did not ask, I hope Mary knew her lessons. I left Thomas much in the same disconsolate mood in which I found him, and James endeavoring to learn with all his might. How they got on, I do not know.

Ah! I wish Sunday scholars would take a hint from this, and not put off their lessons till Saturday night; that is the reason why Teachers so often complain that they spend their strength for nought. Do be persuaded then to begin learning your lessons on the Monday morning, and so on through every day in the week, and you will be sure to know them at the end.

A short time after I paid the last visit, I received a letter from home, saying that from some unforeseen circumstance it was advisable I should return immediately. The next day I hastened to the cottage of the Barkers, to bid them farewell, for I never expected to see them again in this world, as I lived a long way off and was not likely to return. When I approached near the garden, I heard some very loud screams, and wondered what could possibly be the matter; but when I entered the house, I found that Mary was holding the babe while Mrs. Barker was doing something to his mouth; the operation was just completed as I entered, and after a few consoling expressions I heard no more of the baby's music. But there was other music in the house besides the infant's, and whose do you think it was? James you say—no, it was not James; Sarah then—no, neither was it Sarah; but it was that "troublesome, riotous Tom," as they called him, roaring so loud that he might have been heard a long way off.

Mrs. Barker said she was shocked to think I should hear such a noise in her house, and she sent Mary up to fetch the noisy culprit down. And you wish to know

what made him scream so? Well then, I will tell you; he had been beating James, and had told an untruth, therefore he was shut up in a room by himself, and like most naughty boys, with guilty consciences, he was afraid of being alone.

Little girl, what made you so afraid of being alone the other day? Was it because you knew you had done what was wrong? What made you look behind you in such a hurried, frightened manner, but because you was doing something which your mother told you not to do. Oh! how your Teachers wish they could teach you how to act as in the sight of God, to remember constantly that his eye is upon you, that he knows all your words and ways, and that he writes them down in his book; that he knows your thoughts, that he hears you when you use bad words, that he sees you when you quarrel with your brothers and sisters, and that he is very angry with you too; they wish you would think of these truths.

When Thomas came down stairs, he looked very silly, he hung down his head and dared not speak a word, and was going to run out into the fields, but his mother prevented him, saying, "Stop, sir, come and sit down here if you please." Thomas was obliged to obey, and he put his finger in his mouth, and I felt quite ashamed of him. I called him to me, but he did not choose to move from his seat. Ah! naughty, obstinate boy! what do you think his poor mother must have felt? and I know she was grieved, for I saw her wipe her eyes! Cruel boy! to grieve such a tender mother; hard-hearted child! His mother had done every thing for him; she had watched his pillow while he slept, she had rejoiced when he rejoiced, and she had wept when he wept; but he forgot all that.

"Go away from me, Thomas," said Mrs. Barker, and after that I saw no more of him. When he was gone,

I talked to the children upon the wickedness of such bad tempers, and told them I was afraid that if Thomas did not alter, he would be a wicked man when he grew up, and urged them to think how sad such conduct was; and I do think that James knew better than to do so. I loved that little boy—there was something in him so affectionate, so persevering, and so open in his conduct, that it was enough to make any body love him.

That afternoon he ventured to lay his arms on my lap, his hands were clean, not as when I saw them last, and he looked up in my face several times very significantly, and I thought it meant something about the Saturday lessons, but however I did not like to ask, lest I should have heard a bad account. Sarah sat on a little stool at my feet, and Mary was mending a stocking.

"Well, Mrs. Barker," said I, "I am going to leave you, I shall not see you any more I suppose after to-day."

She looked surprised, and said something expressive of her sorrow.

"And now," continued I, "I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified, and may you be preserved faithful unto the end, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." I exhorted her to go on in the strength of the Lord, and in instructing her children to "be instant in season and out of season," to press upon their attention the concerns of eternity, to teach them to love the Saviour, which is the first principle of godliness, and to instil into their minds the lessons of wisdom, and encouraged her by these words·

"Let those who sow in sadness wait
Till the fair harvest come."

"Do not I sow in sadness?" said she, and she thought of Thomas.

"But you have placed one sheaf in the garner of the Lord," I replied; "Susan you know is safely housed; you may be joyful as well as sorrowful." I then took James's hand in mine, and I said, "And James too will seek God."

James smiled, and said, "Yes, I shall pray to God every night and morning."

"That's right," I resumed, "and the Lord who has fed me all my life bless the lad."

Little Sarah climbed upon the stool to receive my parting blessing, which in simple words I gave her.

I then told Mary how much the Lord would require at her hands, and advised her to continue in the path of piety, and to serve the Lord with a perfect heart, willingly: having so done I kissed the dear little ones, blessed the babe, and bade them all a long adieu.

I soon returned home, and when in my closet, in the hour of retirement, wrote for your amusement, and I hope for your benefit also, this short account of my visit. It is true I saw more of the family of the Barkers than I have related, but I know how soon little folks are tired, and therefore have not told you all.

CHAP. VI.

SERIOUS INSTRUCTION.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS EXPLAINED.

We are all of us taught to *say* the Ten Commandments, but there are few of us, I am afraid, who rightly understand them, and fewer still who walk by them, and try to practise them. I may add, that there are none who do not break, more or less, one or other of the ten, and that therefore there is no man living who could bear to be judged by them.

We read in the 20th chapter of Exodus (from whence the Commandments are taken), that God spake all these words saying, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." God was here speaking to the Jews, who were of old his favorite people. The Ten Commandments were first given to them, and through them to us. We must not wonder, therefore, if we find a few expressions which suited the Jews better than they will suit us. Let us now proceed to the explanation.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt have no other Gods but me."

This means, that we must have, or choose to ourselves, the one true and only God of the Scriptures. Now, in order to know who this God of the Scriptures is, it is plain that we must read the Scriptures, and especially the New Testament. He was the God who appeared to Moses, at Mount Sinai, and gave him all these Commandments. He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

and all the prophets and holy men that lived on the earth He afterwards was still more plainly made known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he sent into the world to die for our sins; and he now sends his Holy Spirit into the hearts of those who call upon him. It would take too much time to enter here fully into the character of God; let us only repeat shortly a few of the many things which the scriptures have said concerning him. He is "the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity." "From everlasting to everlasting he is God." He is the "Almighty;" "His wisdom is infinite;" "the light and the darkness are both alike to Him;" "He searcheth the hearts of all the children of men." "By Him actions are weighed"—yea, He "judgeth the secrets of men's hearts." "Our God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil;" "for he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;" and "then the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." He is at the same time a God of compassion, and of tender mercy. What can more strongly prove it than His sending Christ to die for us, and to offer salvation to us? "God is love." "Not that we loved Him," says the apostle, "but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." He described himself to Moses as being "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and of great goodness, keeping mercy for thousands;" yet, at the same time, He will by no means excuse or "clear" the unrepenting and the "guilty." Moreover let us remark, that He is the God of nature and providence; He made the world, and He now governs it. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice." He orders the events of nations and of individuals. He doth all things, both in heaven above, and in

earth below, "according to the counsel of his own will," being righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.

Now, therefore, let us seriously apply this subject to ourselves; and first as to our knowledge of God. Is it then in the God of the scriptures that we believe, or in some false kind of supreme being whose character is more suited to our inclinations, and more indulgent to our sins? Do we believe in a God who will inflict punishment on the disobedient, as well as show mercy to them that love Him and keep His Commandments—who on the one hand is ready to pardon, and "willeth all men to be saved," and who on the other will surely condemn "the unbelieving," as well as "plentifully reward every wicked doer?" Oh! how do men often mistake the whole character of God; some in one way, some in another, according to their various tempers, passions, interests, prejudices, and conceits!

But having learned to know God aright, do we in the next place also reverence Him, and fear Him, and trust Him, and love Him, and serve Him? Do we carry about with us, at all times, a holy reverence and regard to God? And as to our fear of God, I would ask, is it greater in us than our fear of man? When men require or expect us to do a thing which God has commanded us not to do, whom do we obey, God or man? that is the question. In vain do we flatter ourselves that we keep the first Commandment, if the fear of man is greater in us than that of God. Do we trust Him also? Do we trust Him, for instance, both in our prosperity, and in our adversity; and whatever befalls us, do we say that it is the Lord who hath done it, looking forward at the same time to His help in all the future circumstances of our lives; or are we trusting in ourselves, and in an arm of flesh?

And here, above all, let us examine whether we *love* God: do we love Him, as our Saviour, in speaking of this Commandment, expressly says that we ought to do? I mean, do we love Him "with all our heart, and soul, and strength?" Do we love Him more than we love our wealth, our pleasure, our interests, our earthly friends, or any worldly things whatever? "Whom have I in heaven but thee," said the pious Psalmist, "and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee." Do our hearts cleave to God as our best and most desirable portion? Is his favor all in all with us, and do we therefore seek it earnestly by prayer and by all the means through which the scriptures teach us that it is to be obtained? And to crown all, do we obey Him, and diligently serve him? "If ye love me," said Christ, "keep my Commandments." When we say that we love a person, and yet refuse to do the things he desires us, it is loving him in word only, not in deed, or in truth. Nor is it one Commandment only that we must obey. If a man "keepeth the Commandments of God, and yet offendeth in one point, he is guilty of all:" for the same God that saith, "thou shalt not commit adultery," said also, "thou shalt not steal." Nothing more plainly proves men to be hollow and insincere in their whole religion, than their professing to serve God indeed in some things, but refusing to do it in others. Such men do not truly serve God at all.

Such is the first Commandment, and it is the foundation of all the rest. It says, "thou shalt have none other gods but me:" that is, thou shalt set up no god in opposition to me, neither thy lusts nor thy passions, neither the world nor the flesh, nor yet any false gods, such as men's own imaginations may form to themselves, nor such as the heathen fall down and worship.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and show mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my Commandments."

This Commandment was directed more particularly to the Jews. God had separated them from the surrounding nations, who were idolatrous, and had made a covenant with them, that they should not make to themselves gods, such as their neighbors worshipped, but that He should be their God, and they should be His people. He says in this Commandment, that He is a jealous God, that is, jealous of his honor. It is said in another place, "My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." He will have no rivals in any respect. The declaration, that He would visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation, is to be understood as a part of that national covenant, which God made with the Jews. If the fathers worshipped and served Him, then the children also would continue to have Him in like manner for their God; but if the fathers went astray, and did as the heathen, then also the children for generation after generation were to be involved in the consequences. Somewhat in like manner, indeed, it often happens now, that children suffer through the crimes of their parents, which should be an argument with all parents, both to avoid sinning themselves, and to take care lest they draw their children into sin, and misery also.

Let us then abhor this sin of idolatry. It was one into which the Jews were continually falling; and let it be our prayer, as well as our endeavor, that all the nations of the earth, who are now sunk in idolatry, may be recovered out of it; for it is a sin highly offensive to God.

Let us ourselves keep at the greatest distance from this sin; and for this purpose it seems prudent not even to adorn our churches with images, lest any of the people, who see them there, forgetting that God is a spirit, should pay undue honor to the representation.

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

To take the name of God in vain is, in the strongest and worst sense of the words, to call on God to witness a thing that is false, or, in other words, to take a false oath. In many cases men are required by law to make oath of the truth of what they say. Now what solemnity and fear of God should there be in our minds on such occasions! The judge and the jury indeed may possibly not find us out, but "the Lord our God will not hold us guiltless, if we thus dreadfully take his name in vain."

We may here remark by the way, that it is this fear of God, therefore, which is the chief security of the lives and properties of people in society. Now, I think, it cannot be too strongly insisted on, that it is a very solemn thing to call on God to witness any thing we are about to utter, and that, therefore, all carelessness and inconsideration in taking oaths, even though the oaths should not be false, are very sinful. There are some who take custom-house oaths in a very slovenly manner, and who say, "O, it is only a custom-house oath." Others take oaths of office just as lightly, and I believe there are

some who now and then take oaths of a grave and solemn nature in their pastimes, and in mere sport. But let all such weigh well those awful words; "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

The next practice we shall speak of, is that of common swearing, a sin which has not the excuse which most other sins have, of some present pleasure or profit having tempted the person to it. That awful name which angels reverence and adore, and which all good men cannot hear without a peculiar emotion, is trifled with, and in that sense, taken in vain, by a great part of our fellow creatures, almost every hour of every day. Some add cursing to this profane mention of the name of God, and often of the most horrid kind, and, perhaps, when they curse and swear, do not know that they are doing it, which they think is an excuse, but which ought rather to be considered as a proof to what an awful pass the habit has gone. Others, equally without knowing it, use the name of God to express their surprise, or to make their conversation, as they think, more entertaining. Ah! how dreadful will it be for such persons to have all these words brought against them, as so many unexpected sins, on the day of judgment.

But it is necessary to be still more plain and particular on this head, for the very persons who are most guilty of this sin, oftentimes cannot, or will not understand, that what is said is addressed personally to them. To prove the justice of what we are about to add, I would here first call to my reader's recollection what our Saviour himself has observed on the subject of this Commandment. "Ye have heard," said he, "how it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool." To say

"By heavens," or "Good heavens" (the very expression which some people use now) is thus expressly forbid by our Saviour. But not only this one phrase, which happened to be the one in common use in Christ's time, but all others of a like kind are of course by the same precept forbidden. It is painful to mention the various ways of being profane, which irreligious men from time to time have invented; but for the sake of being understood, it seems necessary here, in some degree, to do so. I would observe, therefore, that such phrases as the following—"Bless me," meaning Lord bless me, "Mercy on me," meaning Lord have mercy on me, "By Jove," meaning by the heathen god Jove or Jupiter, "Upon my soul," "Faith," and a variety of others, appear all to be forbidden. "Let your communication," says Christ, "be yea, yea, nay, nay;" that is, let your assertions be plain and simple, and not profane or violent. Let them consist as much as possible in a simple yes and no; "for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil." Sin begins whenever we depart from this simplicity and purity of speech, and it seems even to be declared, that all those profane expressions which our Saviour alludes to, come from the wicked one.

We will close this subject with two remarks—the first is, beware of all violence and passion. Men swear often through passion. To cure men's passion is therefore to take away one cause of their swearing; nay, remember also, that even all violent affirmations, all appeals to God or to religion which are needless, are offences against our Saviour's rule. It is a rule which calls us all to peculiar simplicity and self-command, in our conversation. Be calm, therefore; be not loud and boisterous, but mild and gentle in your speech; and in order to keep your tongue, learn also to keep your heart. Learn, therefore,

in short, those doctrines of the Gospel which go to the correction of the heart.

My last observation is, be serious. The world is full of people, who, in one way or other, are taking God's name in vain, and who do it, as was observed before, without thinking of it: and the reason of it is, they are not serious. They have no awe of the Divine Majesty, or of the Divine Presence. They have not felt the power of religion in their hearts. They have no reverence for God and Divine things, and hence it is that they speak so lightly of them. In vain do we multiply directions, not to use this or the other word, because it is profane: a profane mind will be ever coining new words instead of the old ones which are forbidden, and will betray a person into profaneness a hundred times a day, without his being once aware of it.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all that thou hast to do: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."

In the New Testament, we find our Saviour observing, that "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," that is, the sabbath was made to be a benefit to man, and not a burthen to him. We, who are Christians, should peculiarly rejoice in it as a benefit. What a blessing is it, in particular to the poor of this country, that there is one day in seven, on which they

may rest from their work, and pass the day with their families, in worshipping and praising God, and in considering over all his mercies, as well as in examining into the manner in which they have been performing their own weekly duties. The very brutes, in part, share in the benefit, for this Commandment mercifully provides a day of rest for the ox and the ass also.

It is proper here to remark, that some alteration has taken place, in respect to the sabbath, since this Commandment was given. The day has been changed, for we keep now not the seventh day of the week, which is Saturday, but the first, which is Sunday, because our Lord rose from the dead on a Sunday; and the name of the "Lord's Day" has for that reason been given to it. We therefore unite two purposes together, for we both rest every seventh day, as the Jews did, in imitation of God, who made the world in six days, and then rested or ceased from his work on the seventh, and we also commemorate the glorious resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, as on this day, was raised from the dead, after having died for our sins and obtained eternal redemption for us.

Besides the difference in the day, it is natural that there should now arise some circumstances of difference in the *manner* of keeping Sunday. The Jews, who often indeed misinterpreted their own law, thought it wrong to pluck so much as an ear of corn, or to heal a person of his disease on the sabbath day; and in many other points they were extremely strict. But we have been taught by our Saviour, that this Commandment ought not to be construed so severely by us; and it is now generally agreed, among the most serious Christians, that both works of mercy, and also works of necessity, are perfectly lawful on the sabbath day.

But let us next endeavor to explain distinctly, in what

manner it seems to us, that a Christian sabbath ought, under our present circumstances, to be kept.

And first, it should be considered by us, as a day of rest from our common labor. The very laws of the land require this, by forbidding shops to be opened, and common employments to be followed on the Lord's day, and all magistrates are obliged by their oath, to see the laws of their country executed, in this respect. Every individual, therefore, is bound to abstain from the open violation of the sabbath, provided he reverences the laws or the public religion of his country, even supposing that he is not a Christian himself.

But Christians are called upon to keep the sabbath holy, in a much higher sense. The word holy means separate, or set apart from other days, in order to a religious use. We should, therefore, consider the sabbath as a different day from other days, and should carry that feeling habitually about with us through all the hours of it. Even if necessity should oblige us to do some things which make a part of our common work, yet even then we should endeavor to bear in our minds all the while, that it is the sabbath. I urge this bearing in mind that it is the sabbath, because I know, that if this sentiment is in the heart, needless work will be generally avoided; but that without this, a man will not easily be kept from breaking the sabbath in one way or other.

Remember then, that all common work, which can as well be shifted to the Saturday or the Monday, becomes sinful, if done on the Sunday. Cleanliness must, no doubt, be attended to on the Sunday; but this is to be done by the preparation of Saturday. Our food must be got ready; but this may be managed with very little trouble, even in the largest families, if there is but a disposition to spare all kinds of labor on the sabbath day. There are many houses, I grant, which must not be left

quite empty during divine service; but it is in general enough, if one person is left at home, who may take turns with others, so that the same individual need not always be hindered from attending public worship. There should be an universal agreement among masters and servants, and among servants also with one another, each not only to observe the sabbath himself, but to promote the observation of it among those around him.

But now, to speak of what is still more material. It is of little use to abstain from bodily work, if the frame of mind is quite inconsistent with a due attention to the sabbath. This would be a formal and Jewish sabbath indeed. To comply with the form, but to neglect the spirit, is no true keeping of the Christian sabbath. It should even be remembered, that if Jewish forms are in some respects left off, it becomes us to be the more careful to attend to the substance; for we are now placed under a dispensation, in which all is expected to be "spirit and life."

The sabbath, as was observed before, was made for man. It was made for his good, and more especially for his spiritual good. Whatever, therefore, tends to our spiritual benefit, is fit employment for the sabbath. Public worship has been appointed on this principle, in all Christian countries. But it is necessary, that we should not only be seen attending in our places, but that our minds also should be engaged in the service. In prayer we should feel our need of the mercies we implore; in the confession of sin, we should be affected with a sense of our unworthiness; and in offering up our thanksgivings to God, we should pour out our whole hearts before him. And when we hear the scriptures read, and the gospel of Jesus Christ preached to us, we should listen with an attentive ear, and receive the truth into an honest and good heart. When we are returning from the service, we should not discourse, as many are apt to do, about light

and trifling things; but we should call up the subject which we may have been hearing of at church. We should betake ourselves also at home to the instruction of our children, to the reading of the scriptures, to family prayers, and to conversation that may have something useful in it; or if we take our walk abroad, it should be in order to indulge in meditation on divine things, and in order also to call, perhaps, on our more pious friends and kindred, whose conversation is likely to turn on topics suitable to the day, or to visit the sick, to comfort one that is afflicted, to do an act of kindness and charity, or to pursue some plan of usefulness proper for the sabbath, and in which we may be then regularly employed.

Such are the occupations which become a Christian on the Sunday, and uniting, as they naturally do, with the exercise of the social affections, they may well employ the whole of this sacred season; for that is a poor, motley, inconsistent sabbath indeed, of which one little part only is spent at church, "in building ourselves up in our most holy faith," while the rest is given up to such employments as tend to pull down what we have been building up, and to promote forgetfulness of all that we have been hearing. It is the prayer before we go to worship, and the reflection after; it is the weekly self-examination, which we at this time practise; it is the secret desires of the heart, for the favor of God; it is the humble and holy contemplation of the life, death, and resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour; it is, in short, the heavenly mind, exercising itself on spiritual objects, and shutting out those things that are worldly, which constitutes the true keeping of the sabbath. It is thus that we acquire a "hope full of immortality." "All sorrows mitigated, all cares suspended, all fears repressed, every angry emotion softened, every envious, revengeful, or malicious passion expelled;" we become, on this day, partakers, in some measure, of

the heavenly happiness, and learn to look forward to that never-ending sabbath, to that season of eternal "rest, which remaineth for the people of God."

And now what a privilege is the sabbath! It is often so spoken of in the Old Testament. "I *gave* you my sabbaths," says God to the Israelites, and then he proceeds to found a claim upon that nation for peculiar gratitude and obedience. Let us be grateful to God, that he hath, by his good providence, preserved to us this blessed day, while, in many countries in Europe, it has been grievously profaned, and in some, entirely overthrown. Let us rejoice, that in our country it is, to a considerable degree, observed, though many of the people are learning to confound it more and more with the other days of the week, and are thus impiously casting off all concern for this Commandment.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee."

In the New Testament, it is written, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord." We there also read, that our Saviour himself, when he was twelve years old, was subject to his parents, and in one of the following verses it is added, that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

There is hardly any sight more pleasing than that of a little child honoring his parents, listening attentively to all that is said to him, running quickly to fulfil their wishes, and being thus "subject" or obedient to them, after the example of Christ his Saviour. And on the other hand, there are few sights more melancholy and unpromising, than that of a child who is obstinate and disobedi-

ent, who does not honor his father, nor give ear to the voice of his mother, but must be spoken to again and again, and who can hardly be brought, even by stripes, to do the thing which is commanded him.

The ill behavior of some children, and especially of very young ones, may be considered as greatly owing to a fault in their parents; for the same law which says, "Children, obey your parents," implies that parents ought to teach them obedience. In many places, children seem to rule the house; the most important conversation is interrupted by their unseasonable noise; every one is to wait their time, and all things are rendered subject to their humors.

Now this is just the contrary to what it should be. God has ordained, that parents shall direct, and children shall obey. He has established in the world, a plan of subordination, and that person who begins life by rebelling against his parents, in defiance of this Commandment of God, will be too likely to prove a bad subject, a violent master, an ill-tempered husband, a troublesome friend, and an undesirable connection in all the later periods of his life; whereas a young man or woman, having for a course of years fulfilled faithfully and affectionately, and in the fear of God, every filial duty, and especially having done it under trying circumstances, has given one of the best proofs that can be afforded, of a disposition to attend to all the other obligations of relative life, and deserves to be considered, on this account, as a valuable friend, and a very desirable connection.

And now let each of my readers ask himself, how far he has fulfilled the law of God, remembering also, that it ought to be interpreted, as including all the various relative duties between man and man.

First then, have you set out in infancy, with honoring your parents, both by your conduct and in your heart;

neither disobeying them to their face, nor making light of them behind their back? Have you never grudged them secretly the obedience you seemed to pay, nor been in haste to assert your independence as you were growing up? If you have lost at an early age the blessing of parents, have you submitted, in like manner, to those whom God's providence has put in their place, obeying your step-father or step-mother, your elder brother or sister, uncle or aunt? In more advanced life, have you persevered, as the duty of entire submission lessened, to show to each of those all due deference and respect? In their old age have you endeavored to repay them by your affection and watchful attention, as well as by your bounty, if they needed it, for all their care and tenderness, and liberality to you in your infancy and youth? Are you used to honor all your various relations in their due degrees? Have you submitted yourself to your teachers and instructers, to your spiritual pastors and masters, ordering yourself lowly and reverently to all your betters? And, further, is it your practice to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, to honor and to obey magistrates, not accustoming yourself to speak disrespectfully of them, nor rashly censuring them in those things which you do not understand? If you are a servant, do you obey your master, not rudely answering again, and "not with eye-service only, as pleasing men, but God, who trieth the heart?"

How beautiful is the order of society, when each, according to his place, and in the just degree, pays willing honor to his superiors, and when the superiors regularly fulfil their several parts also: when the people reverence the magistrates, and they govern well the people: when the children every where are seen honoring their parents, and the parents fulfil their duty to the children: when servants are prompt to obey their masters, and masters

deal kindly with their servants: when wives also and husbands, when brothers and sisters, when partners in business, when high and low, rich and poor, according to the several ranks which God has established in society; when landlord and tenant, master and workmen, minister also and people, instead of each proudly pushing himself into the chair of his superior, sits down satisfied with his own place, and endeavors humbly and thankfully, and in the fear of God, to fulfil all the duties of it!

SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not kill."

This Commandment is sometimes rendered, "Thou shalt do no murder;" and very properly, for all killing is not intended to be forbidden, though all murder is. Killing has, in some cases, been not only allowed, but even required in Scripture. Thus, for instance, it is written in the Levitical law, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" and the putting of a murderer to death, by the regular magistracy, after a fair trial, is undoubtedly a means of preventing murder in general.

Murder means, the putting a person to death through deliberate malice; a crime which our very nature teaches us to view with great horror: but to kill a person, by striking him in a passion, without intending his death, or to kill another in a duel, or in a private battle, especially if we have been the aggressors, carries, no doubt, in it much of the guilt of murder in the sight of God. To let a person perish through neglect, whose life has been entrusted to us, as the life of a child is to a nurse, as that of all the patients in an hospital is to the apothecary or physician, well deserves also the name of murder.

I would here take occasion to notice the great sin of self-murder. We have no right over our own lives, any

more than over the lives of others, for we belong to God and not to ourselves; and we are exhorted in Scripture to bear even the heaviest afflictions with patience and resignation to the will of our heavenly Father, who appoints our trials for us.

It may be proper, in this place, to remark, that the enacting of laws, which are too sanguinary in their nature, and also the entering into, or encouraging of wars, which are vindictive and unjust, is unquestionably a breach of this Commandment.

But we must now proceed a step further. Not only to kill is to be considered as forbidden by this law, but also to injure, or to intend to injure. This law forbids those evil and angry passions which are the seeds of murder. Cain first envied his brother, and after that he murdered him. The Pharisees first hated Christ, and after that they were the means of his being put to death. "Whoso hateth his brother," says the apostle, "is a murderer." Our Saviour also finds fault with the Pharisees for explaining this Commandment so loosely as they did; and then proceeds to warn his disciples not even "to be angry with their brother without a cause."

But again; this Commandment may be considered as not only forbidding injuries, but as commanding good will. Christ our Saviour not only did not go about wounding and injuring men, and putting them to death, but he went about befriending them, and doing them good: and we should, according to our opportunity, go and do likewise.

Let us, then, examine ourselves fully respecting this Commandment; for many are apt to fancy, that having never literally been so wicked as to kill any one, they have therefore no concern in it. Let us bear in mind, that we must not only not kill, but that we must not intend to kill; that we must not only not hurt, but that we must not wish to hurt; and that, although therefore we

should be sitting in our private rooms, and not saying or doing any thing, yet if any secret thoughts are indulged in our minds, which are to the prejudice of our neighbor; if we are allowing ourselves to indulge the least ill-will to him, we are by no means clear of the sin of breaking this Commandment. Let us reflect also, that when one thing is forbidden in Scripture, the thing contrary to it may often be considered as commanded. When injuring is forbidden, doing kindnesses, therefore, may be understood to be commanded. Instead of prejudicing our neighbor, do we then delight in doing him service? "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law; for this thou shalt not kill." Do we then show love to our neighbor? Do we then feel a tender concern never to hurt any one by word or deed; never to give even to the meanest of our fellow-creatures the smallest degree of needless pain and sorrow? Do we consider it as a part of our business in life to support the weak, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, according to our ability, and also to comfort them that are afflicted; to heal the wounds which others give, and, after the example of our blessed Saviour, to relieve the temporal as well as spiritual wants of mankind?

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

In this law of God, as in many of the others, the highest degree of crime is mentioned; but all the smaller degrees of it are intended also to be forbidden. Most people, no doubt, will agree, that "thou shalt not kill" implies also, thou shalt not hurt; and that the command to honor our father and mother includes the honor due to those other persons whom God has placed over us; so also, "thou shalt not steal" means, unquestionably, thou shalt in no wise defraud or cheat. On the same princi-

ple, then, we ought to understand the words, "thou shalt not commit adultery," as implying likewise that we must not be guilty of any thing which is contrary to strict chastity. Indeed, our Saviour himself has put it out of all doubt, that we ought thus to explain this Commandment; for he hath expressly told us, that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart." The Scriptures of the New Testament, in many places, declare strongly against unchastity of every kind; and solemnly warn us, after speaking of this and other gross sins, that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Those who deliberately and habitually venture on sins of this sort, would do well, therefore, to remember, that they do it in defiance of the plainest threatenings of God; and that while they continue in such practices, they can have no hope of eternal life, for "the Scriptures cannot be broken."

It is very proper here to remark, that every commandment of God, however strict and harsh it may seem, tends, in fact, to promote the happiness of his creatures. If mankind were allowed to indulge all their natural inclinations just as they pleased, what misery would fill the earth!

Let us now draw the picture of the wretched state of one who has broken this Commandment of God; and let us also take occasion to show from what sort of small beginnings the ruin of a young woman may naturally be supposed to proceed.

We will imagine, then, that a young girl sets out in life with a thoughtless and giddy mind, and with a secret inattention and dislike to serious religion. We will suppose her also having been somewhat spoiled from her infancy, to be not much used to labor, and to be, at the same time, fond of finery, or what she calls fashion and

gentility, and apt to dress herself out, not, perhaps, always very decorously, with a view to men's admiration.

She succeeds in drawing the notice of some bad man or other, who begins to take liberties with her, insisting always that there is no harm in it. Such a man as this soon finds out that she has no very strict principles about her, and he takes for granted that she will make no great conscience of retaining her modesty, having observed that she is not very conscientious about other matters. She is drawn away step by step; one little liberty is permitted, or perhaps invited, and then another, until she has completed her ruin. For a while she tries to conceal her shame, by lying or deceit; but it is impossible long to do it. The tale is out, her character is gone, and from this time she finds it far more difficult to get her bread honestly than before. Now also she is exposed to the rude insults of every profligate man whom she meets, and who knows her story. Being ashamed of her former friends, or having friends who are, perhaps, ashamed of her, she dwells among strangers. She has no eye to pity her, no father or mother to guard and to direct her, no husband to comfort her, no companion to soothe her, or to attend to her in distress. Being driven to extremity, and forsaken, as a young woman almost always is, by her seducer, vice perhaps, by degrees, becomes her trade; and if that be the case, she lives among the vilest company. But what is worst of all, her own heart, under these circumstances, becomes every day more and more hardened. She is undone in every sense. She soon becomes diseased in body, and is still more dreadfully ruined as to her mind: and she is every day sinking lower and lower. As long as she treads this earth, woes upon woes await her, and there seems to be no glimpse of hope for her, while, in the next world, there is nothing but "a fearful looking for of fiery indignation."

There is often one circumstance in the situation of women of this sort, and especially of such as may not be so hardened as I have described, which is very affecting, and that is the state of their children, if they should have any; for what a curse do those children commonly seem to them! What a continual reproach, as well as burden! There is no father to support the feeble infant, nor to provide for the poor, miserable mother. In most cases, therefore, such children are dreadfully neglected, and often perish miserably. But if their bodies are attended to, and preserved alive, how exceedingly destitute are they of instruction, and thus what danger is there lest they should perish miserably as to their souls!

Compare now the case of such an unhappy woman as has been described, with the lot of one who, having maintained her modesty, and set out in the fear of God, has become united with a Christian husband, in that state of wedlock which has been appointed by the laws of her Maker. Her friends, many of them, probably, abide around her, and her husband, who is her chief earthly dependence, supports, protects, and comforts her; he commends her to God by his prayers, and he improves her by his Christian counsel and conversation. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Their education engages her at home, while the father is working for the family abroad; and she feels the tenderest affection for them. She does not view them (like the other woman we described) with a tormenting conscience, being continually reminded by them of her guilt. She is not ashamed (as the other is) of having them called by her name, but she views them as a blessing sent from heaven, as both a comfort and a credit to her, and as a means, possibly, of support, when old age shall advance, and when both her own and her husband's strength shall fail. What a difference! How excellent then is that law of

God which tends to promote such happiness as this, and to prevent the misery which was before described! Never, perhaps, did God consult more clearly the temporal comfort and well-being of his creatures than when he gave the law, which says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" and when he prohibited so effectually, as he has done, in the New Testament, every species of unchastity. Instead, therefore, of saying, as wicked men are apt to do, Where is the harm of following all our natural inclinations? let us learn, on the contrary, to admire the goodness of God in this law, and to consider the libertine as one of the greatest enemies of mankind; as far more hurtful than the thief or the robber; as a rebel, in the first place, against the Commandment of his God, as a hinderer of his own happiness, and a destroyer of the happiness of his fellow-creatures.

The well-being of a country depends, in a great measure, on the attention which is paid in it to the ordinance of God respecting matrimony. It is through the institution of families that children are brought up in an orderly manner, and that the knowledge of God and of his laws is handed down from generation to generation. Villages and towns are apt to be peaceable and happy in proportion as the looser people of each sex are few, and the family men and women are numerous in the place; and when mutiny or rebellion breaks out in the fleets or armies of a kingdom, it is on the family men who may be inlisted in them that the people more particularly depend for their security.

But some there are, perhaps, who readily allow all this, and yet their own practice is a contradiction to it. Possibly they may think that there is no such great crime committed in their case, because they take care that no one shall see them. They say to themselves, as is represented by the Psalmist, "Surely the darkness shall

cover me." "But are not the darkness and the light both alike to God?" And is there not "a day coming, when that which has been hidden shall be made known, and when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts by Jesus Christ?" "Blessed," says our Saviour, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." In vain, therefore, do men comfort themselves with the thoughts of privacy. God sees them now, and it is more than probable that their fellow-creatures also will, after a time, find them out, or have even detected them already, though not known to have done so, for a thousand accidents may bring the most hidden things to light. God also, in his just judgment, may see fit thus to punish, even in this world, the secret offender. Thus, in the case of David, his guilt was for a time artfully concealed, but God was pleased to make it known as a warning to others, and as a part of the just penalty due to the two dreadful crimes which he had committed. "Thou didst it secretly," said Nathan in the name of the Lord to David, "but I will do this thing (that is, I will inflict the punishment) before all Israel, and before the sun." It is here also worthy of observation, that there is no sin which men can indulge to a certain point, and which they can afterwards restrain as they please. "Whoso committeth sin, becomes the servant (or slave) of that sin." He that allows himself even in sinful thoughts, gives the reins to his inclinations, and he little knows whither they may carry him.

Let it then be remembered, that sin is to be resisted in its first beginning, and that every thing, therefore, which may become a temptation either to a person himself or to others, is, on every principle of the gospel, to be avoided. Let all vicious curiosity be restrained in young people. Let all licentious company, let all immodest books, and all loose songs, as well as that "foolish talking or jesting," which borders on indecency, and which the apostle

condemns, as quite unbecoming in a Christian, be utterly avoided; and finally, let it be remembered, that decency, modesty, and propriety, as well as continual watchfulness, temperance, and self-denial, and every thing else which tends to promote purity of heart and life, may properly be considered as required of us by this Commandment.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not steal."

To steal is to take, either by force or fraud, that which is not our own, and it is a sin which is forbidden both by the laws of God and man. It is punished in this world by severe penalties, and the New Testament assures us, that thieves, whom it names together with adulterers, "shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." Men are commonly led into this sin through the distress, or necessity, as they are apt to call it, which has been brought upon them by their other sins. They have been first idle and extravagant, or drunken and debauched, or possibly addicted to gaming; by one or other of these means they have brought themselves into straits, and in order to deliver themselves, they have been tempted to take to thieving. Pride also, strange as it may seem, contributes often to theft. Some men, when they have fallen into distress, though possibly it may have happened without any fault of theirs, are ashamed to own it. They think it very degrading to ask help from others, and they will not do it for the world. They will rather take secretly what is not their due, than ask openly some charitable friend to assist them. Now I conceive, that in this country, if a man can really prove his distress not to have been brought upon him by his vices, there are many good Christians, who, if he applies to them, will take care at least not to let him starve; and there is the public help

to fly to in all cases; so that it seems difficult to state a case in which there can be any tolerable excuse for stealing.

In order then to avoid this sin, let every one keep at a distance from whatsoever leads to it; let him keep clear of idleness and debauchery, and extravagant living, and above all of gaming. And if unhappily he has already got into trouble, either through any of these vices, or through misfortune, let him be afraid of that false shame, and of that hurtful pride, or spirit as it is called, which will not permit him to own what has passed, and to apply to his friends and neighbors.

Let another caution here be given. The sin of downright theft is what men commonly come to by degrees. A man, for instance, who cheats his master, or superior, of money, which has been intrusted to him for some special service, commonly begins merely by borrowing, as he calls it, (though without leave,) some small part, perhaps, of the money of his employer. He says to himself, "I will borrow this only for a day or two, and then I will replace it;" but a practice of this sort being once allowed, he goes a little further and a little further. Large sums are at length misapplied; for it is more than probable that his necessity increases on him; and now, perhaps, he takes money to himself, when there is no chance of his soon restoring it, or even of his ever doing so. He is become a thief almost before he is aware of it. At last, after trying by various shameful arts to conceal the state of his accounts, and thus adding sin to sin, he is found out, and even though he should not be punished in the same way as other thieves are, yet he is no doubt as guilty as they, and he is pretty sure at least to lose his character, and his employment.

There are others again, who have, after a while, become finished rogues, by allowing themselves at first to

steal things which they have thought very insignificant and trifling. They have not considered, that to steal a little thing may be a great crime, and that this is one very common road to robbery, burglary, and to all kinds of wickedness.

Children, therefore, should be taught from their very earliest years to keep their hands from picking and stealing. The children of the rich should be instructed, that to pick fruit out of a garden, to take sweetmeats, or any other thing, from a shelf, a table, or a closet, is a breach of this Commandment; and the children of the poor ought in like manner to be told, that to take the turnips out of a field which is not their own, or the stakes out of a hedge, or the apples which are lying in an orchard, is the road to greater thefts, and is a sin both against God and against their neighbor.

Servants need to be on their guard against temptations of the same sort. If they would be strictly honest, they as well as children must bring their appetites under subjection; they must take care not privately to taste any thing which is not intended for them; neither should they give away meat or drink to any persons to whom they dare not acknowledge that they gave it, nor in greater quantities than they would care to own. I will add, that they ought never to expend their master's money in any way whatever, that is contrary to his wishes. Some servants are apt to do this for the sake of maintaining, as they call it, the credit of the family, when the master is not at all desirous of that sort of credit, but thinks, perhaps, that the expense or show made in the housekeeper's room or kitchen is a great disgrace to him. Every master's money is certainly his own, and an honest housekeeper, or other servant, will feel himself bound to consider only how he may best fulfil the expressed or implied wishes of his master in every part of the expenditure intrusted

to him. For a servant to take perquisites which he does not avow, because, perhaps, he dares not, is another practice hardly reconcilable to exact integrity; for though taken in the first instance from the tradesman, the amount, or perhaps more than the amount, is charged in one way or other to the master, so that the servant should consider himself as taking it from the master, whose leave, therefore, he should have for doing it.

I am aware that a steward, or housekeeper, who acts up to these principles, may be exposed possibly to much reproach from those under him, and to many difficulties; to all which I have only to answer, that he who will act a Christian part, and endeavor to obtain the favor of God, must run the risk now and then of losing the favor of his fellow-creatures, and must himself become an example of self-denial also. That steward or housekeeper, it is to be feared, is not very honest, however he may pride himself on his integrity, who has never yet combated any common customs of families, and has never been charged by any one with being too particular.

In buying and selling, nothing is more usual than for each side to try to overreach the other, and it is little considered that to do this is, in other words, to steal or cheat. Let me now suppose, for argument's sake, that I have nine sheep to sell, and that, having pretended there are ten, I take the money for ten, the mistake or ignorance of the buyer being so great that he does not find me out. "Oh, how scandalous!" every one would say: "this is downright cheating: this is robbing the other man of the value of one sheep. It is what any one ought to be hanged for." Well then, as this is not a reputable mode of cheating, being not a very common one, nor indeed a very easy and practicable way neither, I can effect the same purpose in the following manner: I have only to pretend that each sheep is about one-tenth better than

it is, that it is one-tenth fatter, and heavier, and finer flavored, and older; I have only to give my word for it, that, for some reason or other, the sheep are each of them worth one-tenth more than in fact they are; and then, if I succeed in my attempt, it is plain that I shall get the value of one sheep more than my due, just as much as if I cheated in the other way.

To deceive in selling a horse, to cry up his virtues, but to say nothing of his faults, and to endeavor to get as much money for him with all his faults as if he had no faults at all, is just in like manner to cheat or steal. To put false marks upon goods, in order to make them appear to be the manufacture of some person in repute, who did not really manufacture them, or even to give a false outside appearance to them, or to call them by a false name, or, in short, to say any thing of them which is known by ourselves not to be true, in order to recommend them, is clearly an attempt to cheat, and is a breach of this Commandment.

On the other hand also, the way which some buyers take in order to get what they call a good bargain, although they may be very proud of it, is often little better than stealing: they cry down the thing they want to buy, and pretend to see a thousand faults in it, not fully believing all they say; and as to the excellencies of it, they utter not a word; and when perhaps they have driven a poor, necessitous shopkeeper, or other dealer, down to their price, affecting all the while to think the thing shamefully dear, they go away and tell their neighbors what a bargain they have got. This practice is as old as Solomon's time: "It is naught, it is naught, says the buyer, but afterward he boasteth."

In settling the wages of labor, there is often much fraud attempted on each side. When a workman or servant pretends to do more work than he really performs,

when he spends more idle time than his master knows of, and yet claims the same wages which are due to one that is diligent, he then on his side may be said to cheat or steal; and, on the other hand, when a master works a servant hard and pays him little; when he takes advantage of the man's willingness and good-nature, or of his modesty and simplicity; whenever, in short, a master fails to raise his servant's wages according to his deserts, then the master may be said to cheat or steal. "Give unto your servants," says the apostle, "that which is just and equal." There is a certain point, which may be called the point of justice and equality between man and man, which each side should aim at, and in proportion as this is missed, one or the other party fails in the strictness of his integrity.

To smuggle is undoubtedly to cheat or steal; nothing can be more clear than this, and it is also forbidden in scripture. "Render," says our Saviour, "to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." We are to pay "custom to whom custom is due, tribute to whom tribute is due." Our Saviour chose rather to work a miracle than to fail in paying tribute himself, and yet he did not live under the best of governments. It is the law of the land which decides to whom property shall belong in a vast variety even of questionable cases; and both the law of the land and natural justice are against the smuggler; for it is to be remembered, that if we pay less duty than the law requires, some other subject or subjects must necessarily pay more, and to smuggle, therefore, is to take money, not from government merely, as some selfish and half-thinking people suppose, but from the pockets of these other subjects.

It would be easy to add many other cases, and to prove that even this Eighth Commandment (the one which we are the most apt to make our boast of keeping) is broken

by all ranks of people, at least in the spirit of it, almost every day: for let us consider only for a moment, what a leaning there is in every man towards his own side, whenever any question of property is to be decided between him and his neighbor. We are sure to overrate our own labor, and our own skill, as well as our own general merit, and we expect to have the price of things adjusted, and all the affairs of the world arranged, according to this false view of the matter which we have taken; and of course we in the same degree underrate the labor, skill, and merit of other people. Inordinate selfishness is one of the most common and natural dispositions of man, and this selfishness, by producing a constant partiality to our own side, is the necessary source of frauds innumerable; and it is worthy of remark, that while this spirit of selfishness reigns in us, we shall not only be always trying to wrong others of their due, but we shall also be trying to wrong them without knowing that we do so.

And now what a view does this consideration give us of this state of the world in respect to all matters of property! What wrongs are all men committing, naturally, as it were, on their neighbor, without being sensible of it; or at least what wrongs are they attempting to commit, though unable each to execute his purpose; for undoubtedly it will often happen, that, the unreasonable claims of one side being opposed by the unreasonable claims of the other, the two parties may hit on a pretty fair medium in consequence of the struggle; and whenever fortunately things are settled fairly in this way, it is well if both sides do not go away complaining how hardly they have each of them been used. Such are the effects of that partiality to ourselves which has been spoken of.

Would we then lay the axe to the root of the tree, and

avoid habitual injustice, we must cure this selfishness of spirit. But how is the cure to be effected? I answer, that our Saviour has instructed us in the very point in question, by giving us the following golden rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Let then the buyer put himself in the place of the seller, and the seller in that of the buyer; let the master suppose himself the servant, and the servant imagine himself the master; let each put himself in the place of him with whom he has to deal; let him, as it were, plead before himself the cause of his opponent or rival; let him become counsel for a while on that side, and he will find his partiality for himself wonderfully corrected. Let it, in short, be a rule with all of us never to determine a case between ourselves and our neighbors till we have very deliberately and dispassionately weighed it in this manner.

NINTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

To bear false witness against our neighbor, means, strictly speaking, to swear falsely against another in a court of justice. How careful should every one be, who is called up as an evidence in a public court, to speak "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!" He should recollect himself before he begins to give his information; he should speak without heat or malice, and without prejudice or partiality; and he should remember that even a small error in his evidence, a mistake, for instance, in a place or date, may possibly be the means of fixing an unjust charge, and of taking away the reputation or property, nay, even the life, of a fellow-creature. A witness ought neither to speak falsely in favor of the accused person, nor falsely against him. To do the one,

is to bear false witness against the person accused; and to do the other, is to bear a sort of false witness against the prosecutor, and perhaps, also, against other witnesses in the cause. To do either is to hurt the public, who are all of them our neighbors, and who are more interested than is commonly considered, in having a fair and full testimony given in every case.

My readers no doubt will very readily agree, that we ought to take the utmost care thus to speak truth in a court of justice. I am afraid, however, there are few people who consider, that exactly in the same manner it is our duty to speak truth of our neighbor in private company. This Commandment is against all sorts of false testimony. It condemns the private slanderer and tale-bearer, and the magnifier of stories against his neighbor, as well as the perjured person.

Some people are apt, from the very levity of their character, to take up every light rumor against another. "Somebody has told them (but they cannot exactly recollect who) that there is some very bad story against such a person;" though they scarcely know what it is, they proceed to tell it, and they supply, by their own invention, such parts as seem necessary in order to make the tale hold together, and then the whole goes abroad on the same authority.

Some are apt to grow warm as they are telling a story, and are continually led by this warmth of theirs to overstate a fact, and often, therefore, to charge guilt much too heavily on him whom they censure.

Again, vanity is a motive which leads many into falsehoods. They find they cannot excite attention unless they magnify what they say, and they are very ambitious of being able to surprise, to interest, and to entertain their hearers; they prefer wit to truth, and they cannot resist the pleasure of uttering a sarcastic jest, and of dis-

tinguishing themselves by a lively turn of speech, though at the expense of candor and of justice.

But, perhaps, the most fruitful of all the sources of false testimony and misrepresentation, is, that spirit of envy, and malice, and of jealousy, and pride, and self preference, which, unless it is closely watched, is apt to be incessantly at work in every human breast. Some one is supposed either to have injured us, or to be now against us, or in some respect or other to stand in the way of our advancement, or some one is thought to claim the superiority over us, and seems to possess a greater share of the affection and countenance of one with whom we wish to be the chief favorite. We are prepared to believe an evil story against such a man on very slight evidence, and not only to believe it, but to spread it eagerly, and to exaggerate it exceedingly. On the other hand, we extol him that is on our side, for this is indirectly to praise ourselves; but let a man be our enemy, or let him only be of a contrary sect to us in religion, or of an opposite party to us in politics, how strong then is our disposition to become partial in all our judgments, and, through the prevailing power of this prejudice, to be continually bearing false testimony against him!

Now, in many of these cases, it may possibly happen, that it is only some slight exaggeration that is made, or some little fact that is added, and yet, that these little matters may make a world of difference, for they may constitute even the whole of the guilt. It is to be recollected also, that stories circulate through many hands; and that if a little addition is made by each, an anecdote, which was hardly worth notice at first, may soon grow up into a most mischievous and scandalous falsehood.

How numberless are the lies which are in this manner spread abroad in the world, and how enormous is the evil of which we are now speaking! Who then is the person,

on whom the guilt ought to be fixed? Undoubtedly, all are guilty who have had a share in the exaggeration. All random talkers, all light, unthinking, and, on that account, inaccurate people; all violent and passionate people; all vain people, who seek only to be admired for what they say; and especially all envious and jealous people, which those never fail to be who are aspiring and ambitious, together with all partial, bigoted, and prejudiced people—every one of these, I fear, is apt to be every day a breaker of this Commandment; and so indeed are all, who have not yet learnt to exercise a tender conscience in what they say, and to set a guard upon their lips, even in their hours of relaxation; for let it be remembered, that there are many who may not intend unjustly to prejudice their neighbor's reputation, but who, nevertheless, by indulging prejudices and fancies, and by being too inaccurate in general, in respect to truth, are for ever casting unfair blame on some character or other, and are contributing largely to increase that quantity of false testimony which is circulating in the world.

There are some persons who attempt to avoid the fault of evil speaking, by running into an opposite extreme; they refuse to tell the faults which they really know, and which it is important to reveal; and they do this on the most selfish principle, namely, lest they should bring themselves into trouble: their custom is to praise every body; and they think, that if they always speak handsomely of others, then others will agree to speak handsomely of them. We must beware, however, of imagining that these are the persons who pay obedience to this Commandment, and that their selfish policy and misplaced commendations deserve any praise; as well might the witness in a court of justice, who gives false evidence in favor of the person accused, take credit for his perjury, or the witness who refuses to give evidence

at all, take credit for his silence, when the public interest requires that he should speak out. It is truth and candor, not flattery and false praise, nor universal silence, respecting the characters of men, which are required by this Commandment.

There are also many, who, through their own ignorance of the nature of true goodness, are apt to praise the most irreligious characters; and who are ready to charge every religious person with that very prejudice and disposition to false testimony, which I have been condemning, because he cannot join in the praise. But let flatterers of this class be told, that all those who are irreligious, are considered as wicked, in the word of God; and that (as Solomon has said) "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.

But to return. The practice of tale-bearing is so common, and it leads to so much false testimony against our neighbors, that I propose now to warn my readers particularly on this head; and I will do it, by subjoining a few questions which every one should be prepared to answer, before he ventures to repeat any tale to the prejudice of another.

First then, how did you hear the story? From an actual witness of the fact, or from one that heard it of another? If it came to you only through the second or third hand, pray suspend a little of your belief, till you have heard the truth more exactly, from a more unquestionable authority.

Consider next, how far even the eye or ear witness, who may have told it you, is worthy of credit; whether, for instance, he is an enemy of the accused, or can have an interest in lowering his character; whether he is credulous, or passionate, or prejudiced; and whether his memory, in some particular, at least, may not have failed him.

Consider also, whether, allowing the whole which has been told you to be true, there may not have been something omitted, that ought to have been added, the addition of which would make a great difference in the general impression.

Consider well, also, whether you yourself, in listening to your informer, have been quite free from prejudice, and have avoided every error. It is possible, that you may innocently have mistaken some doubtful expression; for in every language there are ambiguous words, and what is said by the speaker, rather loosely or figuratively, is sometimes understood by the hearer much too literally and strictly.

It may be well to examine, also, whether, notwithstanding the authority on which it stands, there may not be some such contrarieties in different parts of the story, as to render it quite impossible. But even if it should be highly probable; if, for instance, it should contain a charge which is not contradicted by the general character of the accused, a candid man will not be confident in his belief. Endeavor, therefore, in general, to know the character of the accused person before you spread a report to his disadvantage; and if he is reputed to be religious, be particularly suspicious of the tales against him, for the world is apt to revile men of this cast.

Inquire also, whether the person charged has ever been charged to his face. Possibly, quite a new light might be thrown on the matter, if the accuser would but consent to meet the person accused, face to face. If you are purposing to repeat the story, it is a good general rule, to tell it first to the person supposed to be in fault.

And lastly, supposing the fact clear, ask yourself what is the use of telling it. Be sure not to tell it from talkativeness, or from secret envy, or from party preju-

dice. Undoubtedly, there may be good reasons for speaking out, especially when the crime is very serious. The public should be warned against imposition; the character of men also ought, in a variety of cases, to be made known, and if given at all, it ought, undoubtedly, to be fairly given. Be as tender, however, as you possibly can of your neighbor's reputation, and speak against him with regret, not with readiness and satisfaction. Say nothing in heat, for if you do, you will exaggerate. And do not let the story stand on your own credit, but choose rather to let it stand on the credit of him who told it you, and be always willing, therefore, (if permitted) to give up your authority.

And now, to close this subject, let it ever be remembered, that the love of our neighbor is the great thing which is necessary, in order to our fulfilling this Commandment. "Love," as was before remarked, "is the fulfilling of the law; for this, thou shalt not bear false witness." If men did but love their neighbors as themselves, they would then be jealous of their neighbor's reputation, just in the same manner as they now are of their own; and a thousand rules and instructions on this subject might be spared. We do not commonly spread false reports against our own wife, or child, or sister, or brother; and the reason is, that we love our own kindred. Let us then learn to love all men as brethren, and let this Commandment send us to that gospel which so strongly inculcates good-will and charity towards our fellow-creatures.

TENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."

Most of the other Commandments speak of the outward action, and forbid some sin in the life, but this last lays the axe, as it were, to the very root, for it forbids even those covetous desires which are seated in the heart. It is said, "Thou shalt not covet any thing which is thy neighbor's." What is it then that we most like? The taste of people differs. One is in danger of coveting his neighbor's money; another, his neighbor's consequence and power; a third, of coveting the praise and honor which he sees given to another. How apt, especially, are many of the poor, to covet all the comforts and supposed enjoyments of the rich! They have peculiar cause to beware of breaking this Commandment. Both rich and poor, however, are apt to covet the possession of any thing for which they happen to have a taste. They no sooner behold it, than they are ready to cry out, "I wish it was mine."

It is melancholy to think how few there are in the world, who are thoroughly contented with their lot. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the married and the unmarried, the prosperous and the afflicted, are all of them apt to have some unsatisfied desire. There is always some one thing, at least, which is possessed by our neighbor, and which Providence has denied to us, and we are disposed to fix our whole attention on that single point. If we are under no temptation to covet our neighbor's house, nor his wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, yet we covet, perhaps, some ox of his, or some ass, some inferior thing or other in which we happen to take delight; and we may possibly be as wretched at the thought of not possessing it, as if we had coveted his whole fortune and estate. Thus Ahab, although he was king of all Samaria, being unable to get the little vineyard of Naboth, which would have made him a convenient cabbage garden, "laid him

down on his bed and refused to eat." Ahab was as unhappy as any poor man in Samaria, who might be at that time envying the king, and coveting the possession of his whole kingdom.

Now all this complaining and dissatisfied spirit is forbidden in the Tenth Commandment; and the things required by it are, thankfulness and contentedness of heart, patience under trials, resignation under afflictions, a mind free from envy and repining, and a spirit of submission to the whole will of God. How eminently did St. Paul possess the temper which I have been describing! "I have learned," said he, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, for I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

This Commandment, as was observed before, is extremely strict, because it applies immediately to the heart. It will effectually convict every man of being a sinner, who will pay attention to it. We can regulate our actions, perhaps, tolerably well; we can maintain our character; we can do every thing with such an appearance of propriety and exactness, that our fellow-creatures can hardly discern a flaw in us. But which of us duly regulates his heart? To call away our thoughts from every forbidden thing; to govern well our various affections and desires, and to fix them always in their due degrees on their lawful and proper objects; to suppress even the wish for what God sees not fit to give; to wait his time, to leave all to his providence, and to consider all his appointments as ever wise and good; to purify, in short, the secret springs of action, and "to bring," as the scriptures express it, "every imagination into subjection to the obedience of Christ,"—this is the great point.

To the heart then, to the heart, and not merely to the actions of the life, let our attention be directed. Thousands, it is to be feared, have been sinners all their days, and have nevertheless been quite unsuspicious of their sinful state, because they have looked no further than to their outward actions, and have never examined duly into the motives of their conduct, nor watched the secret motions of their hearts. Through this cause they have continued ignorant of God, ignorant of themselves, and ignorant of that salvation which has been provided by the gospel.

Thus have we endeavored to explain these laws of God. And here let me ask, whether any one can deny the perfect excellency of them? Are they not such as it is fit for God to give, and for man to obey? We have shown that love to God and love to man form the foundation of them all. And yet who can deny that he has disobeyed them every day? Now it is one great object of these laws of God to convince men of their guilt, and thus to prepare them for the grace and mercy of the gospel. "Cursed," says the scripture, "is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." But "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "The law therefore is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith." "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." But we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus," and thus "we obtain peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Man, then, is to be considered as a criminal under sentence of condemnation. God's righteous law has already condemned him. God, nevertheless, hath "so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life."

But this faith in Christ is so far from leading men to neglect that holy law which we have been explaining, that it becomes a new motive to obedience; for the Christian now receives, as it were, again from the hand of Christ, those same Commandments which were first given to man through the hand of Moses. He receives them from that Saviour who died for him. "If ye love me," said this merciful Redeemer to his disciples, "keep my Commandments." It should here indeed be observed, and it is a point which has been partly proved already, that the precepts which are given by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament, as the rule of life for every Christian, are, for the most part, the very same in substance, and are sometimes expressed in the same words, as the law or the ten Commandments, for it is the object equally of the Old Testament and of the New, to bring back the corrupted heart of man to the love of God and of his neighbor. The Christian, therefore, is one who studies diligently, and observes carefully, all the Commandments of God and of his Saviour: day by day he exercises himself in examining his life by them; he brings all his actions, great and small, and his very thoughts and desires, to this test. He prays for grace to walk agreeably to that will of God, which he finds revealed in the several parts of the holy Scriptures, and the very knowledge of his redemption constrains his heart to obedience. Still, indeed, his best services are imperfect, and he understands so well the great extent of his duty, that he discovers much corruption in himself, where another man would not at all discern it. He therefore does not trust in his good works, though he is diligent in them, and sees the necessity of performing them. The language of his heart may be well expressed

by a quotation from a judicious and eminent divine of the last century. "We can do nothing," said he, "that is meritorious and worthy to be rewarded. God, indeed, doth liberally promise whatever pertains to a blessed life, to as many as sincerely observe his law, though they be not exactly able to keep it. Wherefore, we acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing well, but the meritorious dignity of doing well we utterly renounce. We see how far we are from the perfect righteousness of the law; the little fruit which we have in holiness is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound; we put no confidence at all in it; we challenge nothing in the world for it; our continual suit to God must be, to bear with our infirmities, and pardon our offences."

[*Cheap Repository.*]

FRIENDLY TALK WITH A RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

"SUPPOSE the case of a hard-hearted boy, who could take pleasure in the grossest acts of cruelty. Imagine him amusing himself by putting to torture some innocent animal, a dove, for example—really enjoying the struggles of agony, which he produces. Let some person remonstrate with him, and try to show him the guilt of such conduct. The boy understands it all. He does not need to have his guilt explained. But it is in vain to try to make him *feel* it. He will struggle to free himself from your detention, and will make an effort, perhaps, to suppress a laugh while you talk with him. It is plain that he cares nothing about it. We should look upon such an individual as a monster. A person of or-

dinary sensibility, of kind feelings, would shudder to do such a thing. The image of the suffering animal would haunt him continually—would drive sleep from his pillow. But the boy has become so hardened that he cares nothing about it.

"This is exactly the case with the sinner. He has been breaking the law of God through his whole life—in every single action, since all have been performed without right feelings. This he knows, but his heart has become so hardened that he cares nothing about it. None of us, not a person in the world, feels his guilt to be as great as it really is,—as great as it appears in the eyes of God."

"We are apt to measure the guilt of an action by the amount of the present injury produced. A much broader view is to be taken. Suppose a youth is detected in setting fire to a dwelling, an old, decayed house perhaps, worth but a few hundred dollars. He is tried and condemned to death, or sentenced to prison for life. Suppose now, that a number of his friends should undertake to intercede with the government in his behalf—should plead that the mischief done was but very slight, that the house was not worth more than five hundred dollars, and should offer to make up the sum and pay it for the boy. How absurd! 'Do you suppose it is the money we care for?' would be the reply: 'do you suppose that the government would imprison an individual for life, for destroying five hundred dollars, or for endangering that sum? no; but the boy is an incendiary,—a dangerous member of the community. If we allow him to escape, others will follow his example, and there will be no end to the bad consequences.' Just so in all kinds of government. Efficient means must be taken to keep down evil, by punishing the transgression—not in pro-

portion to the immediate injurious effects, but in proportion to the more remote consequences—the bad example—the rebellion and insubordination that it tends to introduce.

"To realize, in any degree, the guilt of breaking God's law, is what is meant by *conviction of sin.* To give up rebellion, and to begin to serve him, is a change of heart."

"Persons sometimes find it difficult to separate in their ideas, the feelings of the heart and the conduct. Tell a child who is vexed and out of humor, to give up his ill-humor and feel pleasantly, and he will not suppose he can do it. But, tell him to *look* pleasantly, and, if he tries, the pleasant feelings will come with the pleasant expression. So in the case of the sinner, the right feelings of heart are often brought first into exercise, in the performance of some act which God has required. But here, plainly, it is the feeling, and not the action alone, which is acceptable to God."

"It is well, indeed, to look at the conduct,—at the pride, the envy, the selfishness, the jealousy, as acted out so frequently. It will help us to realize how much evil there is in the heart. But still, our guilt is not to be measured by our wrong actions merely."

The first duty that God requires of every person, is to love Him supremely. There need be no difficulty about understanding this duty. We all understand what it is to love our friends, and it is this same feeling that is to be exercised towards our Maker: it is only to be superior in degree. Love to God will operate in the same way as love to an earthly friend; its manifestations will be the same. We like to be in the presence of those we love, to have frequent intercourse with them, to hear them spoken of; we like to do any thing to give them pleasure—

to be employed for them in any way. So the Christian finds his enjoyment in communion with his Friend in Heaven, in hearing and thinking of Him, and in doing what is pleasing to Him.

We find no difficulty in deciding whether we really love any one of our friends, or not. What should we say of an individual who should speak in regard to his friendship for another, in some such way as this: "I have been supposing all this while that I really loved this individual; but, after all, I may be mistaken. When I come to look carefully into my heart, I am unable to decide positively that there is any affection there for my friend. It may be that I have none at all. I have perhaps mistaken some other feeling for it."—This would seem absurd, and yet it is in the same way that persons will sometimes proceed in examining the state of their hearts towards God. Instead of considering what are the natural results of a sincere attachment to Him, they attempt, as it were, to reach and examine.

Persons oftentimes allow themselves to be occupied with perplexing doubts respecting the evidences of their piety, to the neglect of present known duty. They neglect religious exercises, and desist from efforts for the good of others, from the fear that they may not be really acting from the right feelings of heart. This is the very way to be kept in doubt. Let such individuals engage in the immediate, active performance of every known duty, and they will find here the very best test of their real character and state.

Persons sometimes expect, if they become Christians, that thoughts of God will, at all times, awaken within them strong emotion—emotion like that evinced by the

Psalmist when he says,—"*Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee;*" and they are ready to doubt that they really possess the principle of piety, because their experience does not correspond with some such standard.

Piety, it is true, implies a supreme love to God. We must love Him above every earthly object; we must esteem any object but lightly compared with Him. But all this may be the case, and yet it may be that *stronger emotion* will be awakened many times, by a comparatively trifling object, than is habitually experienced in the contemplation of heavenly things.———The question to be asked is this: "In which do I find my highest happiness?—which do I choose as my portion, religion, or the world? Am I willing to sacrifice every source of worldly happiness which the service of God may require of me to sacrifice?" A child may be very much attached to its mother, and yet a much stronger emotion may, for the time, be excited by some trifling toy, than the sight of his mother would produce. But suppose the question to come, which it will give up, its mother or the play-thing, and it will leave the latter and cling to its mother.

"*Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart, only evil continually.*"———This expression is regarded by some persons as extremely hyperbolical, and by no means admitting of a literal interpretation. It is true, it is not to be understood in a sense which is precisely literal; that is, it plainly was not intended to imply that mankind are always, at every moment of their lives, doing or thinking things that are wrong, in themselves considered. The explanation is this. God requires us all to love Him supremely. Any person then, who lives in the neglect of this command, is continually disobey-

ing God. Let him be doing what he will,—performing actions the most praiseworthy in themselves,—still, without love to God in his heart, and a desire to please Him in what he does, he is committing sin in every thought, and word, and action, of his life. Suppose a father, as he is leaving the house, should direct his child not to go out of doors until his return, but to remain at the window studying his lesson. Suppose the child concludes to disobey; he goes out into the garden instead of remaining by the window. Yet suppose him going on diligently, all the while, with his lesson. He is doing what his father told him to do—something that was right and commendable in itself—and yet is he not guilty of disobedience every moment of the time that he remains in the garden?—It is just so that we are disobeying our Maker every moment of our lives, unless we are living and acting with a desire to please Him. In this view, the language of the text is not at all too strong. "Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is, indeed, only evil continually."

A common ground of self-deception with persons of lively sensibilities, of imagination, and fancy, is this—such persons are in danger of mistaking impressions, received through the medium of natural sensibility, for a spiritual influence upon the heart—a lively perception of the beauty or sublimity of the gospel system, for a cordial reception of its truths. They feel, for instance, the same admiration for the infinite perfections of God, as would be excited by an object of beauty or grandeur, in the natural world—the same kindlings of sympathy in view of the sufferings of the Son of God, as of a pathetic scene of human wo; and the depth of these emotions they make the criterion of their spiritual state, while yet they are cleaving to the sins which pierced the Lord of glory, and

which are an abomination in the sight of a pure and holy God. This sort of poetical interest in religious subjects is very easily mistaken for the genuine appropriate effects of religion itself. Such an interest is very likely to be transient, or, if more abiding, it will not be found spontaneously to influence the conduct.

Real religion is something more than a sentiment of pleasure, or of admiration, in view of surpassing excellence. It involves the idea of a relation between man and his Maker—between a sin-hating Sovereign and his sinful subject; while the kind of sentimental interest we have been describing might be supposed to be inspired by a being or an object with which we had no connection or concern. The beautiful, or grand, or pathetic, in a scene of fictitious representation or of written description, would awaken the same emotions of admiration, or grief, or awe. With the genuine subject of vital religion, the test of his religious state is rather found in his views of his own guilt as a sinner against a Being of infinite perfections, than in the complacence with which he regards those perfections; in the depth of his grateful love to an atoning Saviour, rather than in that excitement of mere natural feeling which the scenes of Calvary are fitted to produce.

Do we hate sin? That is the question. In the language of scripture, is it to us an *evil and a bitter thing?* Do we hate it because God hates it, and not alone, as cutting us off from a hope of acceptance with him?

"He saith unto the man (with the withered hand), Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other." Mark iii. 5.

This hand was paralyzed, entirely useless, and incapable of motion; yet when the man was told to stretch it forth, he made the effort at once to do so. Instead of saying, as we perhaps should have expected he would

have done, that it was impossible for him to move his hand; that he had no power over it; he directly made the attempt to obey; and with the effort came the power. He was enabled to do as directed, as soon as he manifested a *will* to do so.

The conduct of this individual is exactly the reverse of that of thousands who profess to be desirous of obeying the commands of the Saviour. They wish, as they profess, to exercise penitence for sin, and love for their Maker; but how *can* they do this? "How can we repent," say they, "while our hearts are what they are? we must have right hearts before we can do any thing acceptably; and we cannot change our own hearts. It will do no good to *pray* for right feelings, until we *have* right feelings, for prayer will not be heard when the heart is not right." And so these individuals are content to do nothing. They profess to feel *justified* in doing nothing. Now, if an individual is looking about him for something that may serve him as an excuse for neglect of known duty, we may not be surprised that he catches at such a one as this. But will any person who has seriously and determinately resolved to find the path of duty, and at once to pursue it, wherever it may lead, be in danger of resting upon such a plea? Will such a one dare to be quieted with a plea, which involves a charge of injustice against the Most High, while he is himself acquitted of all blame? With just as much propriety might the man with the withered hand have kept his hand by his side, declaring against the unreasonableness of Christ in requiring him to stretch it forth. "If you will restore it," he might have said, "then I will use it; but I cannot move it while it remains as it is." But no; he knew that he should not have been commanded to do what was impossible. He made the attempt, and immediately came the assistance.

So it will be with us. If we attempt any act in the service of the Saviour, that he has required of us, *depending upon his assistance*, we shall assuredly have it. Let us, at least, make the *attempt*, before we excuse ourselves for our failure. How shall we know what is to be our success until we have made a trial? The cases have not been unfrequent in which a sense of pardon and reconciliation through a Saviour has been experienced for the first time in the *act of prayer*. The individuals certainly did not wait in these cases for their feelings to become right, before they sought to be led aright. With the desire to be purified came the purifying influence.

CHILDREN MAY DO GOOD.

Emma walked hastily across the school-room, greeting, in a pleasant tone, such of her companions as came in her way, with "Good morning," and took her seat at her own desk. She lifted its lid, and her eye rested on a slip of paper, which had been placed there since the preceding day. She unfolded it, and read, "Ye are not your own." There was not a word beside. "Ye are not your own." "What can this mean?" exclaimed Emma. "I don't understand. O, it is Maria's hand-writing. I will ask her for an explanation, and why she put it in *my* desk."

Maria usually came a little before the school-exercises commenced, and Emma was disappointed when the signal for opening the school was given, and the punctual Maria had not made her appearance. She took out her books, and began to prepare for her recitations; but she was restless and uneasy. It was much more difficult

than usual to fix her attention upon her studies. "Ye are not your own," was running in her head, and more than once she quite forgot where she was.

At the recess, Emma asked Maria's little sister why she was not at school. Their mother was sick, and Maria remained at home on that account.

Emma found time, during the recess, to write the following note:—

"Dear Maria,

"I am sorry your mother is sick to-day. I have missed you very much, as I always do, and I have wanted you here more than usual.

"My curiosity you contrived to excite not a little, by leaving that slip of paper in my desk. I know it was intended for some sort of a reproof, and had more than half a mind to be a *little* angry; but I remembered that it was my friend Maria's doings. Besides, you are two years older than I am. But I don't very clearly understand what that text has to do with *me*. If you can't come to school to-morrow, do write me one of your long notes. I love to read them, but I will not promise that it will do your volatile friend any more good than its predecessors have done. I should like to be like you, if I could.

"Nothing new in school to-day. The girls in Latin and algebra were as dull and stupid as usual. What a stupid set we have!—scarcely one even tolerable. Teacher and class-mates need the patience of Job.

EMMA."

Maria's mother had been so sick, through the day, as to need her constant attention. Towards evening, she looked brighter, and, to Maria's inquiry if she felt better, answered, "Much, thank you, my daughter. What a good nurse you are! I think I can sleep a little now."

Maria felt very happy to hear her mother say this. She gave her some cool, refreshing drink, tied her cap for her, smoothed her pillow, and drew the curtains at the side of the bed, so that the light might not be too strong for her, and then sat down in a low chair by the bed-side. Her mother was soon in a quiet sleep. Maria then took from her belt the note her little sister had brought from school, and read it. She knew she should not attend school the next day, and with a silent petition that she might be enabled to write such a reply as would do her friend good, she folded half a sheet of paper, and, placing it on a book in her lap, wrote with a pencil the following note:—

"My dear Emma,

"Excuse my writing with a pencil. My mother is asleep, and I don't like to leave the room for pen and ink, lest she should wake.

"I have much to say in reply to your note. You need no assurance of my affection for you, Emma. You wish me to tell you why I wrote that text for you. I will endeavor to do it, frankly and fully.

"I have observed how deeply you are interested in your studies. You have long and difficult lessons, but you are always fully and thoroughly prepared. No one can charge you with a violation of a single rule of school. You are too much absorbed in your studies to meet with any temptations to transgress. Now, this eagerness for knowledge is commendable—highly so, if higher duties are not neglected;—if a desire to excel others is not the main-spring;—if you realize, while enriching your own mind, that 'You are not your own.'

"But, Emma, have you not, in your devotion to your studies, neglected higher duties? You come into the school-room, and have no more intercourse with the girls

than formal politeness requires. You seem to make it your sole object to cultivate and enrich the *intellect*, while the *heart* is neglected. You neglect to cherish and cultivate those feelings of sympathy and interest in your companions, that would lead you to make an effort to make every individual, with whom you have any thing to do, happier than she would be if you were not in school. If you would do this, you would be rewarded by an increase of happiness, tenfold, in your own heart.

"You express a good deal of contempt for the girls in your classes. If you are their superior, who made you to differ? Is intellect, the gift of God, or acquisitions which he has given opportunities to make, to puff up with pride the receiver?

"You will think I am too plain, perhaps severe. But I am older than you. My school-days are almost over. You will remain some time longer. What would I not give to have two years of school-days before me, with my present feelings! I long to have you improve as I wish I had done.

"But I have something more to say. Have you realized that you are not your own? It has seemed to me, that the claims of your heavenly Father have been forgotten, as well as those of your companions. He made you such a being as you are. He has given you uncommon opportunities for improving your mind, and so constituted you, that you find great enjoyment in it; and to his service your all should be consecrated. He is your *Sovereign;* a kind and gracious Sovereign, if you are but ready, humbly and earnestly, to *know*, and to *do*, and to *be*, what he requires.

"Now, Emma, I wanted you to feel that 'you are not your own,' and I hoped that you might be led to think seriously about it; and for that reason, I put that text in your desk. I want you to feel its influence, whenever

you open your books, to prepare for your recitations; whenever you meet your class; whenever you have opportunities of doing a little kindness for any scholar, however inferior she may be, or of saying a kind word, or making any one happier in any lawful way. May we both be enabled to feel, at all times and every where, that we are not our own; that we are the Lord's,—bound to obey his commands, to feel and act as he desires.

Your friend,

MARIA."

[*Ellesa.*]

THE PEACH AND THE POCKET-PIECE, OR TRUE AND FALSE REPENTANCE.

IT was a pleasant Sunday morning, and the number of Sabbath School scholars assembled in the vestry was rather larger than usual. After the prayer had been made, and the hymn sung, the Superintendent told the scholars that he hoped they would be very attentive, while a gentleman from a neighboring school addressed them.

The gentleman then rose, and, after making a few remarks, showing the difference between *true and false repentance*, told the following story, in order to illustrate the difference he had pointed out. I will try to repeat it, as nearly as I can, in his own words.

Some time ago, I paid a visit to a friend in the country, whom I had not seen for several years. I arrived at his house late in the evening, and was cordially welcomed by my friend and his family. He had two sons, both intelligent-looking boys; but it was so late that I had little

opportunity to converse with them, or to notice particularly their characters.

The next morning, I rose very early, and, being unwilling to disturb the family, I walked out into the garden.

It was a delightful morning, and I could not look upon the scene before me without feeling forcibly the presence and the goodness of God. As I was thus meditating, I heard some one approaching very cautiously; and, looking around, I saw Charles, the oldest of my friend's two sons. The path in which he was walking, was separated from the one in which I was, by a few trees and shrubs, so that he did not observe me; he looked around him at every step, and started at every noise, and was so evidently about some mischief, that I stopped to notice him. He paused under a peach-tree, upon which were hanging two very fine peaches—here he again looked around him, to see if any body was near, and then, with a guilty look and a trembling hand, he picked one of the peaches, and devoured it as quickly as possible. He then turned to go away, but after once tasting the fruit, the other peach looked too tempting to be relinquished, and he returned and took that also, and then hurried away.

At breakfast, I noticed him particularly, but I saw no signs of guilt or repentance upon his face. He seemed to eat with his usual appetite, and talk with his usual spirits; and I could only conclude that so long as he escaped detection, he was not sorry for the fault.

The next morning, I was again in the garden at an early hour, and in passing through the same path in which I had walked the previous morning, I saw my friend at the peach-tree. I was just going to join him, when he stooped, and took from the ground a little silver pocket-piece. He examined it carefully, and then read aloud the name *Charles*, which I suppose was cut upon it. I shall never forget his look when he found that his

own son was the author of the loss he had been lamenting. I turned away, for I would not intrude upon him at that moment.

At breakfast, my friend said to his wife, with his usual tone and manner, "I have been to look at my peach-tree this morning"—I looked at Charles, but could see no change in his manner excepting that he was eating very fast;—his father continued, "and I find that my two peaches have been stolen."

"What a pity!" exclaimed James, but Charles said nothing.

"I found this piece of silver at the foot of the tree," said my friend, taking it from his pocket. "Charles, I believe it belongs to you."

Charles now saw that he was discovered, and he burst into tears, and with many expressions of repentance, and promises of amendment, begged his father not to punish him. His sorrow was evidently occasioned, not by the fault, but by the detection.

A few days after, we all noticed that James, the younger son, looked very uneasy—he ate little, and he did not engage in his sports with his usual interest. At length he came to his father and said, "Father, I have done something wrong. I am very sorry for it, and I want to tell you what it was." This, thought I, is *true repentance.*

WINTER.

THE LAST SABBATH OF THE YEAR.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."
JER. viii. 20.

THESE words, originally, applied to the children of Zion in the period of calamity. They had been looking a long time for deliverance in vain, and at length they cried out with despondent sorrow, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." To apply this subject to you, my young friends, in relation to your souls, I fear many of you might make a similar declaration. Let, then, the season of winter, the concluding sabbath of the year, and the subject we have chosen, teach us,

I. *To be thoughtful.* Young, lively persons are apt to be thoughtless and giddy. They think seriousness may very well become those whose hoary heads, in the winter of old age, appear like venerable oaks, blanched on the top with snow and icicles; but, as for them, they are in the spring of life, and the bloom of youth. "Surely," say they, "we may be gay, and merry, and thoughtless."—No, my young friends; for though your pious friends delight to see you cheerful and happy, yet they are commanded to exhort you to "be sober-minded." Indeed, true pleasure, while it is far removed from levity and mirth, is not incompatible with sobriety and religion. You can possess no real happiness, unless it be founded on reflection. O, think seriously. Winter is the time

for meditation; while the stormy blast, the piercing frost, the descending rain, or the fleecy snow, confine us to our habitations, we can call home our wandering thoughts, and reflect on God and our souls, on death and eternity.

The closing sabbath of the year demands consideration. How quickly have the last twelve months departed! how many subjects arise to our minds in reviewing them! The mercies we have enjoyed—the afflictions we have experienced—the sins we have committed—the privileges we have possessed—are all subjects suited to produce thoughtful reflection. This day we stand like travellers on an exalted eminence,—we look back on the country through which we have passed; we recollect the rugged course and the flowery paths which we have trod, the mountains we have climbed, and the plains we have traversed. We glance forwards into futurity, with hope and fear, anxiety and joy; we know not the nature of that part of our journey which lies before us; none of us can affirm that we shall live another year, or even that we shall see the few remaining hours of this; surely, then, we should be thoughtful and serious.

Do we examine the state of our souls, and inquire if we are saved? Surely such an important subject demands the greatest attention, and we cannot be thoughtless without being exceedingly culpable. Let me ask, if you have, during the past year, begun to think seriously of your eternal welfare, or to make any progress in the ways of religion. O, consider your state in the sight of God, ere it is too late!

II. The season of winter, the concluding sabbath of the year, and the subject we have chosen, should lead us *to be grateful.* Whilst we are seated by our comfortable fire-sides, or reposing in warm beds, how many poor

creatures are shivering in the cold, which pierces through their ragged clothes! or lying down to sleep with only a few straws to cover them, while the pitiless blast howls through the broken windows and ruined walls of their miserable cottages! See the benighted traveller wading through the snow in his journey homewards; a fierce storm overtakes him; he tries to support himself against its fury; he endeavors to proceed; he sees a faint light glimmering from his little cottage; he thinks of his expectant wife, and fancies that his children are crying for their father's return; he struggles again and again; his efforts grow weaker and weaker; his limbs are benumbed; he trembles, he falls, he expires, and quickly is wrapped in a snowy shroud. Behold the sailors on the tempestuous sea! "God raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof; they mount up to heaven, they go down to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble;" torrents of rain descend from above, and the lightning with its terrible splendor only serves to show them their dreadful situation. Vast numbers of our countrymen are every winter buried in a watery grave. While we thus contemplate the sufferings which others endure, let us feel thankful for our mercies, and praise the Lord continually.

Surely we should be grateful because God has spared our lives nearly to the close of the year: many, who began it as young and healthy as ourselves, have been called to meet their God. We should not only consider our present enjoyments, but our past mercies, as incentives to gratitude. We have been blessed with health, food, clothing, friends, means of gaining wisdom and piety, sabbaths, Bibles, and privileges too numerous to mention. O, let us feel grateful, and remember that we are responsible for all the mercies and privileges of the past year.

How thankful should we be if we possess just grounds for believing that we are saved! Even those whose consciences proclaim that they are not saved, may rejoice that they are now earnestly invited to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may obtain eternal salvation. We might have been justly forbidden to expect any mercy, instead of being kindly invited to pardon, peace, and everlasting happiness.

III. The season of winter, the concluding sabbath of the year, and the subject we have chosen, may lead to *sorrowful reflections.* This is reckoned the most gloomy part of the year; the days are short; the nights are long; clouds cover the sky; rain, snow, and hail, drop on the earth; the sun is veiled; the trees and the fields are stripped of their beauty. Nature in every part appears sad; and surely there is a sorrow of heart, and a sadness of countenance, by which the heart is made better. If we are properly acquainted with ourselves, and with the situations of others, we shall sometimes indulge a salutary sorrow; not formed of melancholy and despair, but of reflection and feeling. Young persons are apt to consider life as one unmingled scene of felicity; but let them remember, that the year has its winter; day is succeeded by night; and pleasure is often the precursor of pain. The sorrows of seriousness will only destroy deceitful enjoyments; they will augment our real and permanent happiness.

When we reflect on the past year, can we forbear feeling some degree of sorrow? How little have we thought of God, of our souls, and of eternal realities! How much time have we lost! how many talents neglected or abused! how many mercies have we slighted! how many sins have we committed! "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; but unto us shame and

confusion of face." O may we feel that godly sorrow for our sins "which worketh repentance that needeth not to be repented of."

What great occasion for the deepest sorrow have those young persons whose consciences are saying, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Not saved! Well may you be sorrowful! You must perish for ever if you are not saved. You cannot save yourselves; Time is flying rapidly; one stroke of his wings bears you over a year; eternity is surely approaching, and you are still without hopes of salvation. O slight not your danger, but fly unto Jesus Christ, who died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, and who is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Will you still continue to neglect his great salvation? Shall the golden moments of youth pass away while you feel no sorrow for your sins, and no love to Jesus Christ? I beseech you no longer despise his mercy. Cast yourselves at his feet; believe on him while he gives you space for repentance; then the lamentation shall not be yours, "We are not saved;" but you shall sing, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6.

LINES ON WINTER.

Drear, dark and cold, the winter comes,
With storms, and ice, and fleecy snow;
We bless the Lord for cheerful homes,
While chilling winds around us blow.

Some children have but tatter'd clothes,
And straw to lie upon by night;
No comfort cheers them to repose—
Cold, weak, and shivering to the sight.

The travellers roaming o'er the waste,
And sailors on the mighty deep,
How many sufferings do they taste,
While we, secure, in comfort sleep!

May we be grateful, Lord, to Thee,
And thoughtful, as each season rolls;
And while we mourn, to Jesus flee
For grace to save and bless our souls.

While we lament the numerous sins
Which mark the year now nearly past,
Lord, teach us, when the next begins,
To spend it better than the last.

THE LAST LEAF.

Thou last pale relic from yon widow'd tree,
Hovering awhile in air, as if to leave
Thy native sprig reluctant, how I grieve,
And heave the sigh of kindred sympathy

That thou art fallen!—for I too whilom play'd
Upon the topmast bow of youth's gay spring;
Have sported blithe on summer's golden wing;
And now I see my fleeting autumn fade.

Yet, "sear and yellow leaf," though thou and I
Thus far resemble, and this frame, like thee,
In the cold, silent ground be doom'd to lie,
Thou never more wilt climb thy parent tree:

But I, through faith in my Redeemer, trust,
That I shall rise again, even from the dust.

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